

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 14, 2020

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C St. S.W.
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Gaynor:

As state, local, and tribal agencies continue their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to expedite the release of additional emergency funding for personal protective equipment (PPE) recently appropriated for the Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant (AFG) program. This funding, which was included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act enacted into law in March, is vital to protecting the health of our first responders and ensuring they are able to carry out their mission to protect and serve the public.

Firefighters are on the front-lines of the COVID-19 pandemic and must interact frequently with individuals who are experiencing symptoms or have tested positive for the virus. Despite Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations that first responders who anticipate coming into contact with individuals who may be infected with COVID-19 wear adequate PPE, fire departments from across the country are reporting shortages. When the proper respirators, gowns, eye protection, and gloves are not available, it endangers their own health and risks side-lining them from response efforts should they themselves become infected.

The CARES Act included \$100 million in supplemental funding for the AFG program to be used for the purchase of PPE, including for reimbursement of PPE expenses. It is imperative that FEMA work quickly to develop the necessary notices and public guidance so that fire departments and other eligible organizations can prepare any necessary application materials and receive this urgent funding. Additionally, as many fire departments must procure PPE immediately, we ask that any guidance include clear direction ensuring departments are able to easily seek reimbursement from the AFG grant program for their PPE expenditures.

We urge you to take all actions necessary to expeditiously disburse this funding to communities in need across the country. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this program of critical importance to our nation's firefighters.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



John Tester
United States Senator