

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 03, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

The spread of the coronavirus within our nation's communities has strained our healthcare systems beyond capacity, shuttered local businesses, and closed schools nationwide, turning the lives of everyday Americans upside down. From the start of this pandemic, I have been proud to work with both Republicans and Democrats to pass bills providing relief for the American people – including the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*. Through targeted relief, the CARES Act saved jobs, prevented businesses from being forced to shutter their doors, and saved lives through money for testing, personal protective equipment, and hospitals. Importantly, the CARES Act helped address many structural inequities exacerbated by this crisis by providing states and localities flexible funding that could be used to address the specific needs of their communities through the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). Localities have been investing these funds in projects that address the varying impacts of COVID, including broadband internet, which has been critical to allowing people to conduct work and school remotely, and better ventilation in schools, making it safer for children to return to in-person learning.

Unfortunately, the CARES Act currently requires that the CRF funds be expended by December 30th, 2020. This deadline threatens the success of these projects. While local governments have been working at a record-breaking pace to advance these projects ahead of the end-of-year deadline, they have faced obstacles and delays outside of their control. Many of the needed supplies are backordered as communities across the countries adapt to the pandemic. Contractors qualified to complete these projects are limited. Building new infrastructure in the midst of a pandemic poses unique challenges that can delay project completion, such as interruptions caused by illness or local shutdowns, delays in permitting caused by closures and irregular hours, and shortages for materials caused by supply chain disruptions. In addition, the current deadline for CRF funds allows no room for any interruptions that might be typical for projects of similar magnitudes, such as unexpected equipment breakdowns or delays caused by inclement weather.

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Because of these circumstances, it is imperative that we extend the deadline for the use of CRF funding. I urge you to use any additional COVID-19 relief or any end of year appropriations bills considered by Congress before the end of the year to extend the deadline to use CRF funds to the end of 2021. Extending this deadline through the end of next year will empower localities to complete critical projects that are vitally important to both weather the pandemic and rebuild after it is over.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress