

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2308

June 18, 2020

Via Electronic Delivery

The Honorable Tim Walz
Governor of the State of Minnesota
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Governor Walz,

The impacts of COVID-19 have caused incredible hardship to communities across the world. Minnesota has certainly felt the serious effects upon our health as well as the debilitating economic toll of the shelter in place orders. Like you, I am relieved to see the numbers of cases and deaths declining in our state. The citizens of Minnesota are pleased to be returning to work, recreation, and the many joys of a beautiful summer in our great state. Thank you for continuing to listen to local leaders in every corner of Minnesota. Communities remain eager to see their economic engines stabilize and outperform the pre-pandemic levels of strength and optimism.

Congress and President Trump did their part over twelve weeks ago by providing immediate financial assistance through the CARES Act to communities throughout the country in response to this pandemic. I spoke to you during our Congressional Delegation calls and wrote to you nearly a month ago imploring you to work with the legislature to allocate the needed local share of the \$2.2 billion. To date, your leadership has failed to deliver for Greater Minnesota. News reports confirmed last week there was broad agreement among legislative leaders to immediately allocate \$841 million to local government in Greater Minnesota. Then earlier this week, on a strong bipartisan vote of 62-4, the Minnesota Senate passed this agreed upon legislation.

Today, I am appalled to learn you and House Democrats have decided to renege on last week's bipartisan agreement. In case you are unaware, recent Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development data has revealed that your inequitable shelter in place order has resulted in the highest level of unemployment within my congressional district. To the distress of many, you have insisted on the inclusion of unnecessary policy initiatives that arbitrarily blocked the ability to send this much needed relief to Greater Minnesota. These unnecessary initiatives have nothing to do with disbursing the federal assistance for local government defined in the CARES Act. This unilaterally signals to Greater Minnesota that we are only a bargaining chip to you. Minneapolis and St. Paul received their funding months ago, yet communities in Greater Minnesota continue to be held hostage by your lack of leadership.

Further, the legislative leaders who negotiated the agreement are to be commended for the thoughtful approach they took to disbursing these dollars. Commissioners, Mayors, and Councilmembers across the state will be pleased when they receive funds based upon population

that I voted for them to receive three months ago. Communities across Greater Minnesota understand if this bill fails, they will each see less total funding leaving their communities in economic hardship.

On Monday, you visited the largest city in my district and the fourth largest city in Minnesota, the City of Duluth. As I'm sure you have heard, Duluth is in dire need of immediate financial assistance to provide basic services like police and fire just like communities across the state. Budget forecasts indicate a \$38 million deficit or 40% of the general fund for the City of Duluth which Mayor Emily Larson described as: "Absolutely catastrophic." You have also heard from Iron Range Mayors and mayors throughout the state pleading, "where is the money?"

Governor Walz, your silence is deafening. It is far past time to work with the legislative leaders and disburse the agreed upon \$841 million so that Greater Minnesota communities can finally receive the same financial assistance that Minneapolis and St. Paul were granted months ago.

Sincerely,



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress
Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District

CC:

Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman
Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka
House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt
Senate Minority Leader Susan Kent