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Local Officials Join Pappas and Kuster in Calling for Robust Local Funding in Next COVID-19 Response Package

Every New Hampshire mayor and county commissioner, and town officials from across the state join letter to House leadership

MANCHESTER, NH - Today, Representatives Chris Pappas (NH-01) and Annie Kuster (NH-02) continued their call for House leadership to include robust funding for local governments in the next COVID-19 response package. The representatives joined with mayors, county commissioners, and town officials from across the state to send a letter to House leadership urging them to ensure local governments have access to federal aid moving forward.

The sharp economic downturn brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to produce a significant reduction in state and local tax revenue across New Hampshire. Currently, a provision of the CARES Act bars communities with populations below 500,000 from accessing direct federal aid. No unit of local government in New Hampshire state currently exceeds this threshold. Because of this unfair and unnecessary limitation, all of New Hampshire has effectively been cut off from direct federal support for local communities.

“New Hampshire has experienced widespread economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic and our cities and towns have been severely impacted. Unfortunately, without assistance some local governments across our state may be forced to cut back on essential services and lay off workers who are needed to respond to this crisis and help with recovery,” said **Congressman Pappas**. “For these reasons, I urge Congress to provide robust funding for local governments in the next COVID-19 response package in order to ensure that small to mid-sized municipalities and counties can access direct federal assistance.”

“I’ve heard from communities across New Hampshire about both the costs associated with their response to the COVID-19 crisis as well as the serious concerns about revenue shortfalls that are expected in the coming months,” said **Congresswoman Kuster**. “Ensuring that our cities, towns, and municipalities are able to continue to deliver important services and function effectively is crucial to our recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. Smaller municipalities like those we have here in New Hampshire cannot be left behind in the federal response to COVID-19. I urge Congressional Leadership to heed the call of Granite State communities and ensure financial support for smaller municipalities moving forward”

“The COVID-19 crisis has placed an unprecedented strain on our county budget,” said **Toni Pappas, Hillsborough County Commissioner**. “In order to effectively combat this crisis and continue providing essential services to our residents we need to be able to access additional federal funding. I’m grateful for our Representatives’ leadership in calling on Congress to include robust support for local governments in future federal legislation.”

“In just the eight weeks since the governor first issued the State of Emergency, towns and cities have seen significant increases in expenses and even more dramatic declines in revenues. But the financial impact they are experiencing now is just beginning.” said **Margaret M.L. Byrnes, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Municipal Association.** “Unknown long-term costs and potential decreases in other revenue sources are creating anxiety and uncertainty for towns and cities, and many towns are scrambling to figure out what they can do to reduce already-adopted budgets or take other action to take the pressure off their taxpayers. Prompt action is required to support municipalities and to recognize that local government plays an important role in the economy.”