



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 29, 2020

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Immediate Disbursement of Coronavirus Relief Fund to Tribal Governments

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Secretary Bernhardt:

We write to you today in response to the numerous concerns that we have heard from leaders of the 574 federally-recognized tribal governments regarding the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) established under Title V of the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* following the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia's Order that was issued on April 27, 2020 enjoining the Treasury Department from disbursing CRF funding to Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs).

Congress designated \$8 billion from the CRF established in the CARES Act to ensure sovereign tribal governments have the resources needed during the COVID-19 pandemic to cover expenditures associated with the public health emergency. As you are aware, the detrimental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have had a disproportionate health care and economic impact on federally recognized tribes due a chronic lack of essential resources.

The Congressional intent behind the CRF is to expedite relief funds to governments, including sovereign tribal governments, as part of the federal government's larger initiative to provide emergency assistance throughout the country. As you are aware, the CARES Act was passed over a month ago, on March 27, 2020, yet this funding has yet to be disbursed to tribal governments, in part due to litigation aimed at ensuring these resources go to the governmental entities that Congress intended. While the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia issued its decision yesterday to place a temporary injunction from releasing funds to ANCs until a final decision is rendered, the Court's decision does not prevent the Treasury Department from releasing resources to federally-recognized Tribal and Alaska Native governments.

Thus, we respectfully request the Treasury Department immediately begin to disburse the \$8 billion of Coronavirus Relief Funds to eligible federally recognized tribal governments in compliance with the intended purpose of the COVID-19 relief funds and in recognition of the negative impact that every day of delay has on Tribes. Further postponement in disbursing these funds is unnecessary and

works against the federal government's trust responsibility to the 574 federally recognized tribal nations in the United States.

Sincerely,



Deb Haaland
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Lujan
Member of Congress

_____/s/ signed electronically_____/u>
Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

_____/s/ signed electronically_____/u>
Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

_____/s/ signed electronically_____/u>
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

_____/s/ signed electronically_____/u>
Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress