The Honorable Chad F. Wolf  
Acting Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20032  

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin  
Secretary  
Department of Treasury  
Washington, D.C. 20220  

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Washington, D.C. 20201  

The Honorable Pete T. Gaynor  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20472  

Dear Secretary Wolf, Secretary Mnuchin, Secretary Azar, and Administrator Gaynor:

I have determined that the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant an emergency determination under section 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207 (the “Stafford Act”).

My decision to make this determination pursuant to section 501(b) of the Stafford Act is based on the fact that our entire country is now facing a significant public health emergency. The World Health Organization has officially declared that we are in the midst of a global pandemic. As of the date of this declaration, 32 states, 3 territories, 4 tribes, and 1 tribal nation, spread geographically across our country, have declared a state of emergency as a result of the virus. Only the Federal Government can provide the necessary coordination to address a pandemic of this national size and scope caused by a pathogen introduced into our country. It is the preeminent responsibility of the Federal Government to take action to stem a nationwide pandemic that has its origins abroad, which implicates its authority to regulate matters related to interstate matters and foreign commerce and to conduct the foreign relations of the United States. For example, the Federal Government, through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and its component, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has authority
to take the necessary steps "to prevent the introduction, transmission, or spread of communicable
diseases from foreign countries into the States or possessions, or from one State or possession
into any other State or possession," 42 U.S.C. § 264(a), in close coordination with State, local,
and tribal officials. In addition, the Federal Government has responsibility for securing our
borders and overseeing entry of foreign nationals into our country in the interest of the United
States.

This pandemic has the potential to cause severe consequences for our country’s national and
economic security. Based on the advice of public health officials, I have already taken stringent
measures to restrict travel to the United States of foreign nationals who have been recently
physically present in certain countries that pose a threat of intensifying the spread of COVID-19
within our country. And HHS and CDC have taken effective action to address the public health
threat posed by COVID-19. While these actions have been in the best interest of the health of
our people, COVID-19 has the potential to impose a temporary financial hardship on all
Americans. It is therefore critical that we deploy all powers and authorities available to the
Federal Government to provide needed relief.

Therefore, as an initial step, I hereby determine, under section 501(b) of the Stafford Act, that an
emergency exists nationwide.

In accordance with this determination, the Federal Emergency Management Agency may
provide, as appropriate, assistance pursuant to section 502 and 503 of the Stafford Act for
emergency protective measures not authorized under other Federal statutes. Administrator
Gaynor shall coordinate and direct other Federal agencies in providing needed assistance under
the Stafford Act, subject to the Department of Health and Human Services’ role as the lead

In order to meet the challenges caused by this emergency pandemic, I have encouraged all State
and local governments to activate their Emergency Operations Centers and to review their
emergency preparedness plans. In the meantime, I expect FEMA to continue to review all ways
in which it can provide assistance to States consistent with the authorities provided to it by this
letter and by statute.

I am also instructing Secretary Mnuchin to provide relief from tax deadlines to Americans who
have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 emergency, as appropriate, pursuant to 26 U.S.C.
7508A(a).

In addition, after careful consideration, I believe that the disaster is of such severity and
magnitude nationwide that requests for a declaration of a major disaster as set forth in section
401(a) of the Stafford Act may be appropriate.
I encourage all governors and tribal leaders to consider requesting Federal assistance under this provision of the Stafford Act, pursuant to the statutory criteria. I stand ready to expeditiously consider any such request.

Sincerely,

[Signature]