

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write in support of Governor Jay Inslee's March 20, 2020 request for a declaration of a major disaster for the State of Washington. On January 20, 2020, the first domestic case of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) was reported in Washington state. Since that time, our constituents have grappled with 1,376 confirmed cases of COVID-19, of which 74 have resulted in fatality as of March 19, 2020. These numbers are anticipated to grow as the disease spreads rapidly in the coming weeks. Specifically, we urge you to authorize the full suite of Individual Assistance Programs as requested by Governor Inslee, including Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Disaster Legal Services, Disaster Care Management, Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program, Individuals and Households Program Assistance, Voluntary Agency Coordination, and Mass Care and Emergency Assistance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, unprecedented disruption of normal community functions including lifesaving and life-sustaining services and essential community services. COVID-19 threatens the overall health and safety of all residents in the state. The rapid spread of the virus has led to extensive closures of schools and cancellations of gatherings, public events, and conferences, straining state and local economies, and placing a considerable burden on state and local public health workers, emergency responders, health care systems, and government officials.

In order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the state, the Governor has suspended in-person classroom instruction for school districts and institutions of higher education have been advised to create plans for distance learning. Closures of schools have created issues for vulnerable families who struggle to afford child care, food, and other services provided by schools. For example, the 1,106,784 children in Washington state who regularly receive free and reduced meals are no longer able to easily access these meals.

The small business community in our state has suffered substantial economic losses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Major employers are closing their doors or encouraging employees to work from home. Small business have been forced to close, while hospitality and entertainment commerce has dropped precipitously across the Puget Sound region. Many businesses do not have sufficient capital to withstand closures lasting multiple weeks, forcing them to take drastic measures, including temporary lay-offs, to stay afloat and several tribal-owned businesses have closed.

Taken together, the effects of this virus are unprecedented. Governor Inslee and the Washington Emergency Management Division have implemented necessary precautions in order to limit the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, since this public health crisis began state and local government resources have been overwhelmed. This is unsustainable for our state and highlights why federal support is necessary.

We fully support Governor Inslee's request for a major disaster declaration and ask that you grant the full suite of Individual Assistance programs as soon as possible. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



---

Patty Murray  
United States Senator



---

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



---

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



---

Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



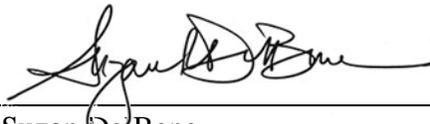
---

Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



---

Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



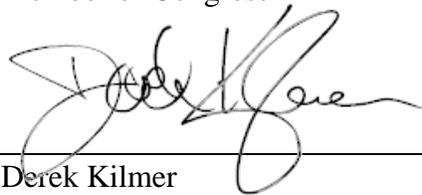
---

Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



---

Denny Heck  
Member of Congress



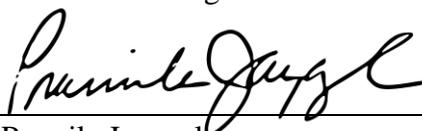
---

Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



---

Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



---

Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



---

Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency