

February 3, 2021

Honorable Members of the Texas Delegation:

As Texas combats the third and largest surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, we once again write to request that Congress provide direct and flexible fiscal assistance to local governments of all sizes. Texas cities need help to continue to address the pandemic and its economic and social impacts and to weather budget shortfalls that we face through no fault of our own.

The budget calamity looming over local governments is real and requires extraordinary measures. As the numbers recently released by Comptroller Hegar illustrate, Texas is not immune from this pain. He reports that December 2020 general fund tax revenues were 9.26% below December 2019's figures. Please note that these numbers do not include delayed property tax revenue losses, the primary source of local government revenue in Texas. Property taxes are always a lagging economic indicator, and we therefore fear that it will be some time before our revenues rebound from the pandemic. All Texas cities are grappling with this devastating reduction in revenue as a result of an unprecedented pandemic. In addition, we are facing this fiscal crisis at the same time we continue to address major public health and public safety challenges and are incurring significant costs to ramp up vaccination efforts and other pandemic prevention and response activities. Cities have been, and will continue to be, the first responders to our pandemic – assistance cannot come at a more necessary time.

Texas cities are major employers that provide core local government services to tens of millions of Texans. However, we are all mandated to balance our budgets and cannot weather a budget deficit for long. Absent direct and flexible assistance, we fear that we will be forced to cut our workforce and reduce services, exacerbating the economic and public health crises created by this pandemic. Indeed, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that local governments have already cut 1 million jobs since the pandemic began, including 56,000 in Texas. Furthermore, without direct and flexible fiscal assistance, those unemployment numbers will only get worse, leading to a drag on economic recovery and hurting efforts to safely reopen our economy.


There is broad support for direct and flexible fiscal assistance to local governments. Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell and Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen have endorsed it in testimony to Congress and in other public remarks, arguing that local government budget cuts threaten to stymie economic recovery and hurt core government services later this year, and potentially years following. Closer to home, Dallas Federal Reserve Bank President Robert Kaplan has repeatedly voiced strong support for fiscal assistance to local governments. In

addition, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and many other national organizations have called for fiscal assistance to state and local governments.

Texas metropolitan areas account for 93.1% of the Texas economy. Vibrant metropolitan areas with strong, fiscally stable local governments will be key to defeating the pandemic and managing the reopening of the Texas economy. Simply put, it will be impossible to have fiscally stable local governments without flexible fiscal assistance directly allocated from the federal government.

Thank you again for your efforts during this unprecedented time and for your attention to our request. We are confident that, working together, our nation can overcome this crisis.

Sincerely,



Sylvester Turner, Mayor  
City of Houston



Ron Nirenberg, Mayor  
City of San Antonio



Eric Johnson, Mayor  
City of Dallas



Steve Adler, Mayor  
City of Austin



Jeff Williams, Mayor  
City of Arlington



Oscar Leeser, Mayor  
City of El Paso



Harry LaRosiliere, Mayor  
City of Plano



Paulette M. Guajardo, Mayor  
City of Corpus Christi



Mayor Ron Jensen  
City of Grand Prairie



Pete Saenz, Mayor  
City of Laredo



Dan Pope, Mayor  
City of Lubbock



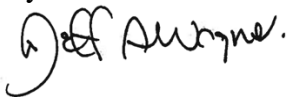
Rick Stopfer, Mayor  
City of Irving



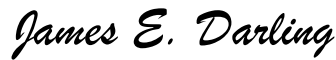
Ginger Nelson, Mayor  
City of Amarillo



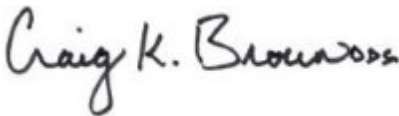
Paul Johnson, Mayor  
City of Jonestown



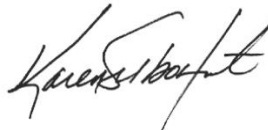
Jeff Wagner, Mayor  
City of Pasadena



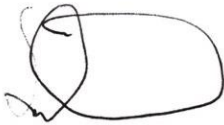
James E. Darling, Mayor  
City of McAllen



Craig K. Brown, Mayor  
City of Galveston



Karen Hunt, Mayor  
City of Coppell



Joe Zimmerman, Mayor  
City of Sugar Land



Josh Schroder, Mayor  
City of Georgetown



Paul Voelker, Mayor  
City of Richardson



Stephen L. Santellana, Mayor  
City of Wichita Falls

  
Bill Blackburn, Mayor

Bill Blackburn, Mayor  
City of Kerrville



Brenda Gunter, Mayor  
City of San Angelo



Geary Smith, Mayor  
City of Mexia



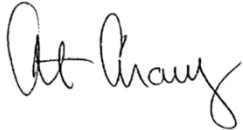
Sara Post Meyer, Mayor  
City of Cuero



Dr. Ianthia Fisher, Mayor  
City of Crockett



Sergio Coronado, Mayor  
City of Hidalgo



Antonio Araujo, Mayor  
City of San Elizario



Todd Wright, Mayor  
City of Petronila



Al Turnage, Mayor  
City of Hooks

*Cissy Gonzalez-Dippel*

Cissy Gonzalez-Dippel, Mayor  
City of Floresville

*Mike Hendricks*

Mike Hendricks, Mayor  
City of Luling



Spencer H. Smith, Mayor  
City of Harker Heights



Clyde C. Hairston, Mayor  
City of Lancaster



Connie Schroeder, Mayor  
City of Bastrop

*Olan Kelley*

Olan Kelley, Mayor  
City of Highland Haven



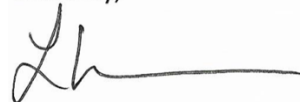
Terrill Bartlett, Mayor  
City of Canadian



Tammy Dana-Bashian, Mayor  
City of Rowlett



Tobe Shields, Mayor  
City of Spearman



Lee Urbanovsky, Mayor  
City of Buda

*Willie Leal, Jr.*

Willie Leal, Jr., Mayor  
City of Poteet

*Ricky Swick*

Ricky Swick, Mayor  
City of Bremond



Ron Humphrey, Mayor  
City of New Boston

Cathy Skurow, Mayor  
City of Portland

George Galbreath, Mayor  
City of Thorndale

Caroline Wadzeck, Mayor  
City of Dayton

Arthur L. Miner, Mayor  
City of Watauga

Sean Skipworth, Mayor  
City of Dickinson

Leroy Hughes, Mayor  
City of San Augustine

David Hoover, City Manager  
City of Colorado City

Roger Shugart, Mayor  
City of Brazoria

Gilbert Gomez, Mayor  
City of Robstown

David Hillock, Mayor  
Town of Little Elm

Sam R. Fugate, Mayor  
City of Kingsville

Juan Jose Zamora, Mayor  
City of Port Isabel

Tom Daly, Mayor  
City of Selma

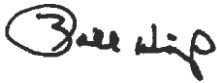
Doyle Robinson, Mayor  
City of Panhandle

Barbra Pinner, Mayor  
City of Levelland

Ricardo Guerra, Mayor  
City of San Benito

Jane Hughson, Mayor  
City of San Marcos

Tim Handren, Mayor  
City of Boerne



William M. "Bill" Hastings, Mayor  
City of Katy



Pam Gosline, Mayor  
City of Vernon



Robert Williams, Mayor  
City of Jourdanton



Ambrosio Hernandez, Mayor  
City of Pharr

**Olan Kelley**

Olan Kelley, Mayor  
City of Highland Haven



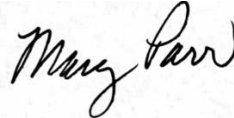
Manuel Baeza, Mayor  
City of Marfa



Tom Hesse, Mayor  
City of Brownfield



Vicki Sanson, Mayor  
City of Lavon



Mary Parr, Mayor  
City of Eagle Lake



C.R. Evans, Jr., Mayor  
City of Overton



Michael Barnhart, Mayor  
City of Lake Dallas

Sincerely,



Patrick Payton, Mayor  
City of Midland



Mark McFadden, Mayor  
City of Olton



Mark L. Stanfill, DVM, Mayor  
City of Red Oak



Jim Olk, Mayor  
City of Lucas

**Joe Carlyle**

Joe Carlyle, Mayor  
City of Troup



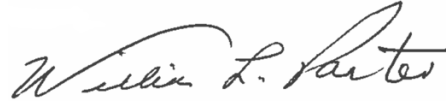
Sheila Petta, Mayor  
City of Wilmer



Larry Vernon, Mayor  
City of Eastland



Rick Carmona, Mayor  
City of Terrell



William L. Parten, Mayor  
City of Madisonville



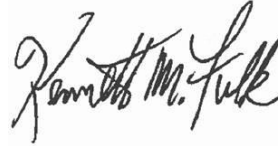
Henry Wilson, Mayor  
City of Hurst




Mike Foreman, Mayor  
City of Friendswood



Cathy Bennett, Mayor  
City of Ivanhoe



Kenneth M. Fulk, Mayor  
City of Allen



Brian P. Johnson, Mayor  
City of Kennedale