

April 23, 2020

Honorable Governor Kate Brown  
Office of the Governor  
900 Court St NE, Suite 254  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Honorable Governor Brown:

On behalf of special districts in Oregon, the Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) would like to thank you and your administration for your efforts to protect and aid the people of Oregon in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including your recent Executive Order 20-16. Like you, we are working hard to address the critical needs of our members who are supporting individuals, small businesses, health care and social service delivery in our communities during this difficult time.

Millions of Oregonians and thousands of businesses rely on special districts for their critical local infrastructure and essential services related to water, sanitation, fire protection, transportation, soil and water conservation, parks, libraries, and more. Our members are proud to be serving their communities in their time of need but increasing aid and support for Oregonians means increased costs in the face of an uncertain time.

Independent special districts, like our members, many of which serve disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities, have been and others will be substantially harmed should the pandemic continue. Our members and other local governments are gravely concerned that they have not be considered for inclusion in resources already offered to corporations and other entities.

**While we are grateful that the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act allocated \$150 billion to states and local governments with direct allocations to larger local governments, it is critical that a robust portion of the funding coming to Oregon be directed to local governments with fewer than 500,000 people.** Oregon's special districts are also on the front lines of the coronavirus crisis. At this moment, so much more is being demanded of our first responders and other vital local government services are stretched thin.

During this time, many districts have issued moratoriums on shutting off water, wastewater, sanitation and other utility services; recreation and park districts, and library districts, which operate largely on programmatic fees and rental charges, have been forced to close their doors. Soil and water conservation districts are unable to perform contract work; and, first responders and front-line public servants with fire protection districts, healthcare districts, and county service districts providing police protection face increased risks with limited personal protective

equipment. These vital community resources were not especially considered in the Coronavirus Relief Fund, and very little is expected to flow to these local agencies through the state.

**SDAO, representing more than 1,000 special districts in the state, respectfully urges you to deploy meaningful relief to local governments, including special districts, with populations under 500,000 from the \$1.6 billion Oregon Coronavirus Relief Fund allocation.**

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We are ready to work with you as we continue to protect Oregonians and facilitate our state's recovery.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Stratton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Frank Stratton  
Executive Director