



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman

Sam Graves
Ranking Member

Katherine W. Dedrick, Staff Director

Paul J. Sass, Republican Staff Director

March 18, 2020

The Honorable John C. Fleming, M.D.
Assistant Secretary
Economic Development Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Suite 71014
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr. Fleming:

We write you in response to the health and economic crisis facing our country as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our American citizens are bravely facing the challenges of this pandemic and responsibly protecting themselves and each other by following the directions of public health authorities and staying home. As you know, this has caused many businesses to close, laying off or furloughing workers, and has disrupted the supply chain globally.

Given the urgency of this crisis and the unparalleled economic damage, we request that you take measures within your authority to ensure that Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs are available to respond as quickly as possible. Specifically, we urge the EDA to create eligibilities that allow businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to apply for EDA grants under the Public Works and Economic Development Act. Further, we ask that you increase the federal share of grants given in response to COVID-19 to the maximum allowable amount. In addition to these measures, we encourage EDA to provide greater flexibility to existing grantees who are impacted by COVID-19 related staffing issues.

The EDA is a key player in U.S. economic growth, and its work will be vital to the Nation's recovery. We hope that you take this action immediately to provide as much relief as possible to current grantees and those who need resources to make it through these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Peter A. DeFazio
Chair

Dina Titus
Chairwoman,
Subcommittee on Economic Development,
Public Buildings, and Emergency
Management