



Duckworth, Durbin Join Senator Reed, Democratic Senators In Calling For FEMA Cost-Sharing Waiver

January 19 2021 1:12 PM

WASHINGTON, DC— In an effort to protect public health and swiftly free up federal resources to help states with necessary COVID-19 response efforts, U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined U.S. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and 31 of their Democratic Senate colleagues in urging the incoming Biden Administration to waive the 25% non-federal cost share requirement for FEMA assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The letter states: “COVID-19 has upended life for many Americans, and state, local, and tribal governments have faced the dual challenges of unexpected costs and declining revenues. Increasing the federal cost share for FEMA assistance will give them the budgetary space to effectively respond to the ongoing health and economic hardship the pandemic has created.”

To date, the Trump Administration has declined to allow the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to waive the full amount of cost-sharing requirements for emergency work undertaken by states and communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Typically, federal disaster funding requires a 25 percent state and local cost-sharing match. But through Direct Federal Assistance and Public Assistance for Emergency Protective Measures during a Major Disaster Declaration, FEMA is authorized to cover up to 100 percent of federal cost share for response and recovery costs “if warranted by the needs of the disaster.” However, so far, the Trump Administration has only authorized a federal cost share of 75 percent, leaving state and local governments to pick up 25 percent of the overall costs of fighting COVID-19.

“As you know, only one official -- the President -- has the authority to increase the federal cost share for disaster assistance,” the letter continues. “Because the Trump Administration has so far ignored numerous requests for this relief, we request that you exercise that authority as expeditiously as possible once you are in a position to do so.”

Along with Duckworth, Durbin and Reed, the letter was signed by U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Michael Bennett (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), Tom Carper (D-DE), Christopher Coons (D-DE), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Angus King (I-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Ed Markey (D-MA), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Patty Murray (D-WA), Gary Peters (D-MI), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tina Smith (D-MN), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Ron Wyden (D-OR).