

April 20, 2020

U.S. Senator Michael Bennet
U.S. Senator Cory Gardner
U.S. Congressman Joe Neguse

Dear Honorable Congressional Delegation Members,

On behalf of the Boulder City Council, the Boulder Chamber and the constituents we represent, thank you for your ongoing work to help Colorado and the nation respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the unfolding economic crisis. Your championship of the *CARES Act* provides crucial support for many of our residents and local businesses. We have been following federal activity over the last several weeks and are heartened that leaders appear to understand that much more financial help is still needed. As we write, Congress is nearing a deal on a \$450 billion package that includes funding for the Small Business Administration's disaster relief fund and Paycheck Protection Program, as well as for hospitals and testing. We support this funding and respectfully request, if it is indeed too late to add it to this current package, that the next federal funding package address the following needs.

- **Local Government Stabilization** – Direct funding for local governments with populations under 500,000 is needed. It should be made available for a variety of needs, including to offset revenue losses as well as to compensate for new COVID19-related expenses, including the costs for PPE and hazardous duty pay that frontline workers will require as they increasingly return to work. The funding should also be made available to permit local governments to fill the gaps where federal resources have not yet met, or cannot meet, the needs of the most impacted members of our community, both individuals and businesses. Finally, we ask that the funding be free of unnecessary and complex accounting requirements that would only create inefficiencies. H.R.6467, the *Coronavirus Community Relief Act*, which would provide \$250 billion in federal relief to local governments with populations less than 500,000, is an important approach that deserves serious consideration. We thank Congressman Neguse for introducing it and ask that companion legislation be introduced in the Senate.
 - Boulder Lost Revenue – The city has furloughed 737 employees as a result of anticipated lost revenues of at least \$28 million, or nearly 10 percent of annual revenue, excluding utility fees, since the stay-at-home order went into effect last month.
 - Boulder Expenses – Many of the city's remaining employees have been repurposed to focus on COVID-19 recovery work. In addition, the city is funding an emergency shelter for the unhoused exhibiting symptoms of the virus. It is also spending over \$500,000 in support of small businesses; \$200,000 in direct grants and \$15,000 in direct artist funding paid directly by the city. The remainder of the funds have been made available

in support for micro-loans, Small Business Development Center navigation services (with emphasis on non-English speaker support), and reimbursement of support services provided by Boulder Chamber and Latino Chamber.

- **501(c)(6) Membership Organizations** – Chambers of commerce and other membership-based organizations like Convention and Visitors Bureaus are essential in connecting business owners to Small Business Development Center consultants, city, county and state departments, assisting with business applications and more. They are at the front lines of keeping local economies afloat and will be essential in the economic recovery process. Yet these organizations were excluded from the CARES Act.
 - Boulder Chamber Impact – The Boulder Chamber faces significantly diminished revenues as the small businesses that make up between 70 to 90 percent of their membership experience unprecedented revenue losses. This leaves very little of their support base to invest in the organization that has traditionally provided the economic leadership that will be necessary for Boulder’s recovery.
- **Housing and Support for the Homeless** – The city supports funding for rental assistance to avoid creating a financial cliff that renters may fall off of when eviction moratoria are lifted and back-rent is owed, and to ensure the continued viability of our country’s essential affordable housing infrastructure. Moreover, the city supports additional Emergency Solutions Grants that are needed to respond to coronavirus amongst people experiencing homelessness.
 - Boulder’s Efforts to Keep People Housed - The city’s and county’s housing authorities provided bridge funding in April for their residents impacted by the pandemic using reserves. However, keeping people housed will require additional federal rent assistance. The full potential impact of increased evictions at the end of the stay at home order is not currently known.
- **Small Businesses** – As previously mentioned, we support additional funding for the Small Business Administration’s disaster relief fund and Paycheck Protection Program. Moreover, we request that the PPP deadlines for rehires be extended and that additional funding be made available to address the rent and occupancy expenses of small businesses.
 - Impact to Boulder’s Small Businesses - Boulder’s 7,000+ businesses (96% of which are small businesses with less than 50 employees) have experienced a significant blow. A survey of local businesses completed just this past week found a majority of respondents reporting a need for assistance with rent or other occupancy costs (56%) and help in financially supporting employees (43%). Eight of ten responding businesses have had to implement staffing changes due to COVID-19 (including reducing hours, wages or furloughing or laying off workers). Nearly one-third of businesses with 50 or more employees and just over one-fourth of businesses with 2 to 49 employees reported layoffs. While most are hopeful that implemented staffing changes are temporary, it should be noted that this may be an evolving position based on the length and severity of current operating conditions. Considering the fact that 31% of respondents are considered “essential” businesses still allowed to operate, this may be an early indication of a substantial shift in local job availability for Boulder as a regional

employment hub. It also signals concern for neighboring communities as Boulder has a 60% in-commuting workforce.

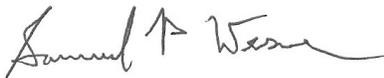
- Support for Boulder's Small Businesses - The Boulder Business Response and Recovery Alliance is coordinating small business grants, outreach to ensure safe operations for essential businesses and engagement with commercial landlords to ease community commercial eviction concerns. To lead the way, the city has itself offered delayed rental payment options for its own commercial tenants.
- Boulder's Regional Economic Impact - The city is home to major institutions like CU Boulder and the federal labs and is a state and regional employment hub employing workers who live in communities throughout the state. An estimated \$5.25 billion in wages or salaries leaves the city annually. That is why investment in Boulder's innovation economy drives business activity across the Denver regional economy and can help reignite our state as we dig out of the financial devastation.
- ***Additional Direct Funding for Households*** – Continued federal stimulus funding is needed to assist with individual rental, food and basic needs. This funding should come with expanded income eligibility to support a wider array of households in need. These dollars could then be used to match and leverage local resources stretching the broader range of support for households in need.
 - Support for Boulder Households - As shared above, Boulder's local housing authorities were able to dip into their limited reserves to cover the loss of rental income in April. As the need for financial housing support expands, it will be even more critical for residents to have access to unrestricted income supports (medical benefits, food benefits, cash benefits, disaster benefits, unemployment benefits) to cover the costs of meeting their basic needs.
- ***Access to Comprehensive Health Coverage for COVID-19 Patients*** – Funds should be made available to expand access to comprehensive health coverage, beyond limited stop-gap funding provided through the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund, for uninsured COVID-19 patients to ensure people can access all needed care without financial hardship.
 - Health Coverage Needs in Boulder – A disproportionate number in Boulder County who identify as Hispanic/Latinx of any race have tested positive or probable for the novel coronavirus, based on detailed data compiled by Boulder County Public Health. This situation is exacerbated since this population has the highest uninsured rates of any racial or ethnic group within the nation. Comprehensive coverage will ensure prompt detection and early treatment reducing demand on the hospital system.
- ***Transportation Infrastructure*** – We support the request made by AASHTO that \$49.95 billion be made available in flexible federal funding to offset the estimated 30 percent loss in state transportation revenues in the next 18 months. This federal backstop will help to ensure state DOTs can operate and maintain their systems without disruption and allow current transportation projects and plans to continue. Moreover, in order to boost the years-long economic recovery that will be necessary once the national emergency subsides, Congress

should look to pass a major transportation investment package in the form of surface transportation reauthorization.

- Boulder Transportation Needs – The SH 119 multimodal corridor project is a prime candidate for funding, especially the intersection project at SH119 and Hover Road. Boulder has additional transportation programs, with both mobility and air quality benefits, that will stagnate due to local and state funding cuts, absent access to new federal funding opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your leadership in helping to tackle this unprecedented public health and economic crisis.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam Weaver". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small arrow pointing upwards and to the right above the name.

Sam Weaver
Mayor, City of Boulder

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Tayer". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

John Tayer
President, The Boulder Chamber