

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 22, 2020

Secretary Steven Mnuchin  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin,

Thank you for your engagement with the U.S Congress to provide critically needed economic stimulus during the ongoing COVID-19 public health and economic crisis. We write on a bipartisan, bicameral basis to support the certification of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) for the Coronavirus Relief Fund to receive direct federal assistance from the Department of the Treasury. As it stands now, the counties of Northeast Ohio, with the exception of Cuyahoga County, lack direct access to relief mechanisms enacted by the CARES Act. These counties include: Geauga County, Lake County, Lorain County, and Medina County.

As you know, the CARES Act (H.R. 748) contains a critical provision that will be used to assist state and local governments in their response to the crisis engulfing our nation. Indeed, local governments are bearing the heavy burden of response with dwindling resources while helping struggling Americans manage as best they can. As the entities closest to the ground, these local governments are on the front line of the fight, and we must ensure they have adequate funding in the face of dire budget shortfalls and increased expenditures.

Section 5001 of the CARES Act provides that Treasury will provide assistance directly, and not through the State intermediary to units of local government of more than 500,000 people. The provision, allows for a significantly broad definition of local governments and specifies that “[t]he term ‘unit of local government’ [includes] . . . other unit of general government below the State level with a population that exceeds 500,000.” Section 5001 explicitly allows any government that represents more than 500,000 and includes regional councils of government which are chartered under state law.

NOACA exists as an official unit of government under both federal law (23 U.S. Code § 134) and state law (Ohio Revised Code Sections 307.15 and 302.21). Under Ohio law, the boards of county commissioners of any two or more counties may “create any joint agency to exercise any power, perform any function, or render any service which any board of county commissioners may exercise, perform, or render.”

As such a local unit of government, NOACA encompasses more than 800,000 people in Geauga County, Lake County, Lorain County, and Medina County. As a unit of local and general

government as envisioned by the statutes, NOACA plays a leading role in coordinating policy solutions to complex regional challenges, such as COVID-19. Direct eligibility would allow for more robust capacities to contain the virus at the crossroads of four major interstate highway corridors (Interstates 71, 77, 80, and 90), that would otherwise be left out of direct funding. For these reasons, extending eligibility to NOACA would improve economic recovery in this important region, while also boosting the public health responses of localities.

We fully support the effort by NOACA for certification and would appreciate your favorable consideration of its recent submission. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



MARCY KAPTUR  
Member of Congress

/s/

SHERROD BROWN  
U.S. Senator



DAVID P. JOYCE  
Member of Congress



ANTHONY GONZALEZ  
Member of Congress