Honorable Members of the Texas Delegation:

We are pleased that in light of the continued public health, economic and fiscal challenges our nation faces, there appears to be a growing bipartisan consensus that Congress should enact a fifth coronavirus relief bill by the end of this month. As you work on that fifth measure, we want to once again thank you for all you have done to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic and fiscal crisis. Congress has taken swift and bold action commensurate with the scope of the crisis and we appreciate your efforts to help our nation address this challenge. Unfortunately, as the virus surges once again in Texas, more federal assistance will be needed for the state and its cities to weather the unprecedented economic downturn we face. As such, we want to reiterate our urgent request that you quickly pass an additional measure that includes direct and flexible fiscal assistance to all cities across the nation.

The budget calamity looming over local governments is real and it requires extraordinary measures. As the numbers recently released by Comptroller Hegar illustrate, Texas is not immune from this pain. He just reported a $650 million decrease in tax revenue over the past month and $5.7 billion since the pandemic began, with June sales tax revenue 6.5 percent below the June 2019 level. Please note that these numbers largely predate the recent COVID-19 surge. We therefore fear that state and local revenue is going to take time to rebound. We also fear that if we do not stabilize our economy, we could see a drop in property tax revenue next year.

All of our cities are facing this devastating reduction in revenue through no fault of our own. In addition, we are facing this fiscal crisis at the same time we are facing major public health and public safety challenges, leading to an exponential increase in demand for our services, especially on the public health and safety front. Texas cities are major employers that provide core local government services to tens of millions of Texans that are critical to public health, safety, and welfare and that serve as the foundation of our economy. However, we are all mandated to balance our budgets; absent direct and flexible assistance, we will be forced to cut our workforce and reduce services, exacerbating the economic and public health crises created by this pandemic. Indeed, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that state and local governments have already cut 1.6 million jobs since the pandemic began, including 91,000 in Texas. With the pandemic still with us, we fear that those numbers will only get worse without direct fiscal assistance, leading to a drag on economic recovery and hurting efforts to safely reopen our economy.

There is broad support for direct fiscal assistance to local governments. Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell has endorsed it in testimony to Congress and in other public remarks. Closer to home, Dallas Federal Reserve Bank President Robert Kaplan has also voiced support for fiscal assistance to state and local governments. In addition, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and many other national organizations have called for fiscal assistance to state and local governments.
Texas metropolitan areas account for 93.1 percent of the Texas economy. Vibrant metropolitan areas with strong, fiscally stable local governments will be key to managing the reopening of the Texas economy successfully and safely. Simply put, it will be impossible to have fiscally stable local governments without direct and flexible fiscal assistance from the federal government.

Thank you again for your efforts during this unprecedented time and for your attention to our request. We are confident that, working together, our nation can overcome this crisis.

Sincerely,

Sylvester Turner, Mayor  
City of Houston

Ron Nirenberg, Mayor  
City of San Antonio

Steve Adler, Mayor  
City of Austin

Eric Johnson, Mayor  
City of Dallas

Betsy Price, Mayor  
City of Fort Worth

Dee Margo, Mayor  
City of El Paso

Jeff Williams, Mayor  
City of Arlington

Joe McComb, Mayor  
City of Corpus Christi

Dan Pope, Mayor  
City of Lubbock

Ron Jensen, Mayor  
City of Grand Prairie
Shelley Brophy, Mayor  
City of Nacogdoches

Emmanuel Wealthy, Mayor  
City of Wilmer

Clyde C. Hairston, Mayor  
City of Lancaster

Andrew S. Friedberg, Mayor  
City of Bellaire

Stephen L. Santellana, Mayor  
City of Wichita Falls

Henry Wilson, Mayor  
City of Hurst

Donald Baird, Mayor  
City of Colmesneil

Kenny Phillips, Mayor  
City of Mobile City

BJ McGinnis, Mayor  
City of Blanket

Terri. W. Brown, Mayor  
City of Marshall

Sergio Coronado, Mayor  
City of Hidalgo

Sara Post, Mayor  
City of Cuero

Dr. Ambrosio Hernandez, Mayor  
City of Pharr

Rodger Brown, Mayor  
City of Clyde
Cathy Skurow, Mayor
City of Portland

Jane Hughson, Mayor
City of San Marcos

Michael Byrum-Bratsen
City of Iowa Colony

Travis Hall
City of Iowa Colony

Dr. Ianthia Fisher, Mayor
City of Crockett

Joe Passanisi
City of Iowa Colony

Pam Gosline, Mayor
City of Vernon

Laura Bianco
City of Iowa Colony

Victor A. Contreras, Mayor
City of Marion

Celestino A. Zambrano
City of Iowa Colony

Sharion R. Scott
City of Iowa Colony

Terrill Bartlett
City of Iowa Colony

Cathy Young, Mayor
City of Chillicothe

Roy McDonald, Mayor
City of West Orange
Wyman Williams
Wyman Williams, Mayor
City of Commerce

Anita R. Rodriguez
Anita R. Rodriguez, Mayor
City of Yoakum

David Dreiling, Mayor
City of Greenville

Manuel V. Baeza, Mayor
City of Marfa

Patrick McNulty
Patrick McNulty, Mayor
City of South Padre Island

Benjamin Gomez, Mayor
City of San Benito

Antonio Araujo, Mayor
City of San Elizario

Cyndie Rathburn, Mayor
Town of Rancho Viejo

John Packer, Mayor
City of Marble Falls

Willie Leal
Willie Leal, Mayor
City of Poteet

John E. King, Mayor
City of Rockdale

Jim McInnis, Mayor
City of Hamilton

David Rutledge
David Rutledge, Mayor
City of Bridge City

Allyson Crenshaw
Allyson Crenshaw, Mayor
City of Robert Lee
Mark Groneman
Mark Groneman, Mayor
City of Vega

Ramiro Rodriguez
Ramiro Rodriguez, Mayor
City of Palmhurst

Johnnie Hauerland, Mayor
City of Meridian

Nin Hulett
Nin Hulett, Mayor
City of Granbury

Rusty Brockman, Mayor
City of New Braunfels

Vicki Sanson, Mayor
City of Lavon

B.J. Alvarado, Mayor
City of Booker

Gerald Joubert, Mayor
City of Forest Hill

George Coulam, Mayor
City of Todd Mission

Bob F. Brown, Mayor
City of Lufkin

Bruno J. Lozano, Mayor
City of Del Rio

Suzanne de Leon, Mayor
City of Balcones Heights

Caroline Wadzeck, Mayor
City of Dayton
Bob Sims, Mayor  
City of Breckenridge

Lisa B. Pierce  
Lisa B. Pierce, Mayor  
City of Kirby

Ed Tidwell  
Ed Tidwell, Mayor  
City of Lago Vista

Lisa B. Pierce  
City of Childress

Thurman Bill Bartie, Mayor  
City of Port Arthur

Sandy Cox  
Sandy Cox, Mayor  
City of Lakeway

Mike Hendricks  
Mike Hendricks, Mayor  
City of Luling

Tim Handren, Mayor  
City of Boerne

Stephen Alonis  
Stephen Alonis, Mayor  
Town of Quintana

Cheryl Sanders, Mayor  
City of Anahuac

Becky Ames, Mayor  
City of Beaumont

C.R. Evans, Mayor  
City of Overton