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**From:** Michael Jones  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 19, 2020 12:54 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** Utilities COVID letters  
**Attachments:** FINAL\_Water-WasteWater Utility Letter to the Washington State Congressional Delegation\_05-15-2020.pdf; FINAL \_ Water-WasteWater Utility Letter to the Senate Delgation of Washington State\_05-15-2020.pdf

Council,

I wanted to make you aware that I signed on to the two attached letters to Washington's federal delegation regarding utility funding relief related to COVID 19. The letters seek assistance for lost revenue to utility providers, assistance for low income customers, and investment in capital infrastructure as part of future stimulus packages.

Michael Jones, MPA  
City Manager

**City of Blaine**  
435 Martin Street, Suite 3000  
Blaine, WA 98230

360-543-9981

*Please note that all emails to and from me are potentially subject to public disclosure under public records act requirements.*

May 15, 2020

Honorable Adam Smith  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Rick Larsen  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Jamie Herrera Beutler  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Derek Kilmer  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Denny Heck  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Suzan DelBene  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Dan Newhouse  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Pramila Jayapal  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Kim Schrier  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Washington State Congressional Delegation,

Thank you for your leadership to confront the public health and economic crisis caused by COVID-19. We are grateful for your support of our communities amid this public health emergency. The need for safe, reliable water for drinking and sanitary services is particularly critical during this time. We are ensuring that every customer has access to safe, clean, reliable water during the pandemic.

However, the COVID-19 crisis has triggered declining revenues and increased costs for drinking water and wastewater, and a significant infusion of federal funding is needed to support utilities in their ongoing work to protect public health and the environment. As Congress works on the next phase of assistance for the coronavirus response, water and wastewater utilities across Washington state urge Congress to prioritize funding for utilities consistent with the following priorities:

**Assistance for Low-Income Customers:** With so many Washington residents and businesses suffering unprecedented economic hardship because of the coronavirus outbreak, more utility customers are finding it hard to pay their bills, yet access to clean water for hand washing and sanitation is critical to stop the spread of COVID-19. We request federal assistance to help utilities maintain services to low-income and struggling households during the pandemic.

**Federal Assistance to Help Mitigate Lost Utility Revenues:** We need access to federal funds to maintain utility operations that are affordable to customers. Across the nation, water utilities are estimated to see revenue reductions and cost increases of up to \$14 billion, which is nearly a 17-percent average direct impact on utility budgets; and public clean water agencies will face a \$12.5 billion loss of revenue due to COVID-19. Water utilities of all sizes in the state are struggling, with the possibility of smaller, rural water systems failing entirely. We request funding to utilities to help with costs related to water service disconnections, reconnections of delinquent accounts, customer bill assistance programs, and the impact of business shutdowns during the pandemic.

**Capital Project Funding:** We urge Congress to provide targeted grants and forgivable loans, through EPA's Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds, to help utilities and municipalities rehabilitate or replace aging water and wastewater infrastructure.

Unlike transportation, the water and wastewater sectors have limited federal grant sources and rely on ratepayers who pay 80 to 90 percent of the costs. Water and wastewater utilities must continue providing these essential services despite the financial challenges utilities are incurring due to falling revenue from declines in usage from commercial and industrial users, maintaining service to delinquent ratepayers who cannot afford their bills, and moving forward whenever possible with near-term critical infrastructure projects. Funding water infrastructure projects is a smart and sustainable way to help keep rates affordable, construct needed capital projects, bolster the nation's economic recovery, and create and sustain well-paying jobs.

On behalf of Washington's water and wastewater utilities and the residents we serve, we thank you for your consideration of our requests and appreciate all you are doing to help Washingtonians and others in our nation during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

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President, Board of Commissioners  
Asotin County Public Utility District

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CEO  
Association of Washington Cities

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Cc:

The Honorable Jay Inslee  
Governor  
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Laura Watson  
Director  
Washington State Department of Ecology

John Wiesman  
Secretary of Health  
Washington State Department of Health

May 15, 2020

The Honorable Patty Murray  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
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