April 27, 2020

Senate President Larry Obhof  
Statehouse  
1 Capitol Square  
2nd Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Senate President Obhof,

On behalf of the entire central Ohio community, we want to thank you for all the work that you have and will continue to do to keep our community informed and safe during these unprecedented times. It is reassuring the State of Ohio has been recognized as a leader in the fight against the coronavirus.

Like many communities across America, our local leaders are grappling with ways to stay afloat during these challenging times. Unfortunately, many communities do not have fund reserves to rely upon in the face of declining income tax receipts. The possibility of laying off staff including police officers and firefighters is becoming increasingly real.

As you may be aware, the U.S. Treasury Department is providing Ohio with $4.5 billion in relief and recovery funds. Of this amount, 45%, or just over $2 billion, has been targeted to aid the state’s local governments. Out of that $2 billion, an estimated $800 million has been earmarked for direct disbursement to entities over 500,000 in population, which covers Ohio’s five largest counties and the City of Columbus. The remaining portion, approximately $1.2 billion, has apparently been given to the State to distribute to the balance of local governments in the State.

It is imperative that local governments be able to receive a direct sub-grant from the State of Ohio. However, until the U.S. Treasury issues further guidance to review, we do not know exactly how that might work.

We believe it is vitally important that local governments have a seat at the table in the development and adoption of distribution formulas and procedures for dispersing the State’s $1.2 billion in locally earmarked federal funds. With more than 3,000 local government entities, we want to ensure an equitable solution is created for everyone as we head into difficult fiscal times. Without equitable distribution of these funds, local communities will have to make difficult decisions to cut essential services that cannot be replicated by the State of Ohio such as police patrols and fire/EMS response.

We appreciate all that you are doing to support the state and local leaders in this important time. We respectfully ask for inclusion as you develop and consider these distribution policies and procedures while taking into account the essential role local governments play in the ensuring the health, safety and welfare of our communities.

Kind regards,

David A. Collinsworth, Chair  
Central Ohio Mayors & Managers Assoc.

William Murdock, Executive Director  
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission