

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 25, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500-0003

Dear Mr. President:

We write in strong support of Governor Roy Cooper's request for a major disaster declaration for North Carolina as a result of national, statewide, and local efforts to combat the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. As confirmed COVID-19 cases have continued to rise, state and local entities have taken measures to mitigate this public health emergency. On Monday, March 23, 2020, Gov. Cooper took the extraordinary step of closing schools statewide until May 15, 2020; prohibiting gatherings of greater than 50 people; and closing thousands of small businesses. Bars and restaurants have been limited to take-out orders for a week. While these necessary actions will mitigate the spread of COVID-19, millions of North Carolinians will experience significant economic hardships due to this unprecedented health crisis.

North Carolina is home to more than 833,000 small businesses that employ roughly 1.6 million individuals. Many small business owners, employees, and vendors are already experiencing economic hardship in the form of layoffs, lost wages, lost revenues, and difficulty paying their lease. We have heard from countless small business owners who are devastated, not only because they are losing money, but also because they've had to lay off workers whose families depend on their jobs.

Hospitality and tourism are some of the worst-hit industries. From the Great Smoky Mountains and Asheville's culture, to Charlotte's international airport and Lexington's barbecue; from the Piedmont Triad's furniture industry to the Research Triangle's arts, culture, and educational institutions; from our legendary Sandhills golf courses to our beloved lighthouses on the Outer Banks, our small businesses are suffering untold losses. As North Carolina looks forward to hosting the Republican National Convention and thousands of other events over the next year, we know we must maintain our small businesses and provide immediate assistance to out-of-work employees in order to shore up our economy and continue to be a welcoming state to all.

Furthermore, the ripple effects are beginning to be felt throughout our communities, the state, and national economy. Over 80,000 North Carolinians applied for unemployment insurance last week, far exceeding the typical weekly average. Many workers in local industries, from motorsports to mom and pop shops, do not currently qualify for many forms of federal aid, but would under a major disaster declaration. Given the extent of the severe economic impacts of this pandemic, a major declaration is warranted. A major disaster declaration will allow North Carolina to get the resources it needs to provide relief during this public health emergency.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to help North Carolina residents weather the impacts of COVID-19. We urge you to take this request under serious consideration and grant the request for this disaster declaration.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

/s/ Alma S. Adams
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

/s/ Thom Tillis
Thom Tillis
United States Senator

/s/ George Holding
George Holding
Member of Congress

/s/ David E. Price
David E. Price
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Walker
Mark Walker
Member of Congress

/s/ Richard Hudson
Richard Hudson
Member of Congress

/s/ Richard Burr
Richard Burr
United States Senator

/s/ G. K. Butterfield
G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

/s/ Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Member of Congress

/s/ Virginia Foxx
Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress

/s/ David Rouzer
David Rouzer
Member of Congress