

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

March 18, 2020

Kem R. Fleming  
Director  
Office of Disaster Assistance, FOCE  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
101 Marietta Street NW, Suite 700  
Atlanta, GA 30303-2725

Dear Mr. Fleming:

We write in support of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts's request that you issue a declaration of economic injury as a result of the novel coronavirus pandemic. This ongoing public health emergency has already caused significant disruption and economic harm to our constituents and is likely to continue for weeks or months to come. The Small Business Administration (SBA)'s assistance in making low-interest loans available to Massachusetts small businesses is urgently needed.

Since January 31, 2020, more than 200 Massachusetts residents have tested positive for COVID-19, and more than a thousand have been subject to quarantine.<sup>1</sup> These numbers are expected to rise as tests become more widely available. Due to evidence of community spread, Governor Charles Baker declared a state of emergency on March 10, 2020,<sup>2</sup> and on March 15, 2020, he issued a ban on gatherings of more than 25 people, a three-week suspension of school operations, and the closure of bars and restaurants for on-site dining.<sup>3</sup>

These aggressive actions are needed to protect the health of the community, especially older people and those with underlying health conditions who are at the highest risk from COVID-19. However, they have had a devastating impact on the Massachusetts economy, and the repercussions will continue to be felt for many weeks. The cancellations or postponements of large events, including sports games, concerts, parades, and the Boston Marathon,<sup>4</sup> have hurt businesses that provide entertainment, food, and transportation to attendees, including travelers from other states and countries. Bars and restaurants are operating at greatly reduced volume

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health, "COVID-19 Cases, Quarantine, and Monitoring," updated March 17, 2020, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-cases-quarantine-and-monitoring>.

<sup>2</sup> Office of Governor Charlie Baker, "Governor Baker Declares State of Emergency to Support Commonwealth's Response to Coronavirus," March 10, 2020, <https://www.mass.gov/news/governor-baker-declares-state-of-emergency-to-support-commonwealths-response-to-coronavirus>

<sup>3</sup> Office of Governor Charlie Baker, "Baker Administration Announces Emergency Actions to Address COVID-19," March 15, 2020, <https://www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-emergency-actions-to-address-covid-19>

<sup>4</sup> NBC Boston, "Boston Marathon Postponed Until September over Coronavirus Concerns," Young-Jin Kim and Nia Hamm, March 13, 2020, <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/decision-on-2020-boston-marathon-to-come-friday-morning/2090439/>

because they may only provide food for pick-up and delivery. Although child care centers are not obligated to close, they are likely to face reduced revenue as parents stay home with their children, either because of health concerns or because their own workplaces have closed; this could have a devastating long-term impact on these businesses, which operate at thin margins in order to serve their communities.

We appreciate that the SBA has already issued disaster declarations for some areas in Massachusetts,<sup>5</sup> but as of this week, the economic impact of the coronavirus emergency has reached all parts of the Commonwealth. A survey by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) found that more than 700 businesses have already been affected, including businesses in all 14 counties.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, we ask that you immediately issue a declaration of economic injury and make Economic Injury Disaster Loans available to small businesses throughout Massachusetts. These crucial sources of credit can help our constituents maintain jobs and services during this unprecedented emergency.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

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Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

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Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress

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Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

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Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

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<sup>5</sup> As of March 18, Berkshire, Hampden, and Worcester counties had received coronavirus disaster declarations. U.S. Small Business Administration, “Disaster Loan Assistance: Current Declared Disasters,” accessed March 18, 2020, <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/Declarations>

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Governor Charles D. Baker to Ken Fleming, U.S. Small Business Administration, March 17, 2020, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/march-17-2020-governor-sba-declaration-letter/download>

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Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress

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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

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Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

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Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress