May 4, 2020

Dear Members of our Georgia Congressional Delegation:

We hope this letter finds you well. Please know how much we appreciate your public service at this time, as well as every effort that you have already made through funding and regulatory relief on the federal level on behalf of our citizens.

To that end, we would like to express our support for a $500 billion relief package for the states with flexibility to offset lost revenue collections during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. As the chairs of the appropriations committees of the Georgia General Assembly, we are formally requesting your support for the timely approval and dispersement of these funds to close the unprecedented gap in dollars required to maintain a conservative and lean government framework of services for the state of Georgia and our constituents.

As one of the 10 largest state economies in the nation, we are experiencing an unprecedented fiscal shock as the world stands still. Three of our premier economic engines and sources of national pride are disproportionately crippled by the lack of movement: the busiest airport, the fourth largest port, and the World Congress Center’s 1.5 million square feet of convention and exhibit space. As of mid-April, 10 percent of Georgians, primarily associated with hospitality, food and services industries have filed for unemployment benefits.

While we are all hopeful that this pandemic abates quickly, the fiscal impact on our state is already broaching an estimated and abrupt $4 billion decline across the final quarter of this fiscal year and into Fiscal Year 2021 beginning July 1. We are requesting that all state agencies, without exception, submit 14 percent reduction plans for consideration when the General Assembly reconvenes. In addition, we have initiated withholds for the current year and are grateful that there are state Revenue Shortfall Reserve funds that can provide a short-term buffer; however, all of these measures together are still not enough to close this gap.

We share your regard for conservative spending practices, and despite the expected reductions in force and services for our people because of these painful budget cuts, we will do our part. In turn, we respectfully ask that you advocate and support the appropriation of $500 billion in flexible state stabilization funds that are proportionately distributed to help offset greater upheaval and longer recovery in Georgia.

Warmest regards,

Terry England

Blake Tillery