

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 27, 2020

The Honorable Pete Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Gaynor,

While we appreciate the support that the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) has thus far provided to the State of Illinois, we are writing today to express concerns with FEMA's processing of the State's requests for Public Assistance as it relates to COVID-19 expenses.

To date, FEMA has approved less than five percent of Illinois's submitted claims, while taking an average of more than 90 days to process a claim. Furthermore, we have received reports that your agency has retroactively applied new guidance to previously submitted claims, and further, that it has applied unpublished guidance to claims. We also have received reports that these belated or unofficial policies have been used to justify denials of reimbursement applications.

We request expedient clarification on these policies and subsequent denials, as untimely guidance, nontransparent procedures, and moving goalposts only make it more difficult for States to navigate federal aid—and at a time when their resources are already thinly stretched.

We urge you to direct your agency to be transparent, timely, and communicative as possible as they enforce administrative requirements, and to bear in mind the overarching goal to assist already-burdened states in this time of need.

We look forward to hearing from you and stand ready should you need our assistance.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Cheri Bustos
United States Representative

Mike Quigley
United States Representative

Robin L. Kelly
United States Representative

Bill Foster
United States Representative

Raja Krishnamoorthi
United States Representative

Lauren Underwood
United States Representative

Jan Schakowsky
United States Representative

Daniel W. Lipinski
United States Representative

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
United States Representative

Danny K. Davis
United States Representative

Bradley S. Schneider
United States Representative

Bobby L. Rush
United States Representative

Sean Casten
United States Representative