

May 1: USET SPF Alert: TIME SENSITIVE Need Addtl Republican Co-sponsors for Senate Bill to Waive FEMA Cost-Share

Dear USET SPF Board of Directors and DC Tribal Reps,

We apologize for yet another time sensitive request, but we just learned that Senators Udall (D-NM) and Heinrich (D-NM) are about to introduce the [Tribal COVID-19 Disaster Assistance Cost Share Relief Act](#) [draft bill linked], legislation that would waive the 25% cost-share imposed upon Tribal governments during the COVID-19 emergency as a condition of receiving direct or indirect Public Assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). Instead, the federal government would cover 100% of the Tribal costs, regardless of whether a Tribal Nation is a direct recipient or a subrecipient of the assistance.

As you are likely aware, the cost-share is currently serving as a barrier to Tribal Nation access to this funding and by extension, the activities and resources it supports, including the purchase of emergency supplies and hiring necessary emergency management personnel. Unlike other units of government, Tribal Nations do not have access to tax revenue from which to draw in order to provide the cost-share and conduct these emergency activities pending reimbursement. Given that the federal government has unique trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations, this legislation would ensure the provision of Stafford Act emergency assistance is more reflective of this sacred duty.

With the bill set to be introduced this Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, Sens. Udall and Heinrich are **seeking additional Republican co-sponsors**. USET SPF strongly supports this legislation [see [joint letter](#) to the President requesting waiver] and is encouraging member Tribal Nations to reach out to Republican Senators ASAP, and request that they co-sponsor this critical bill. Interested co-sponsors should contact Dominic Saavedra with Sen. Heinrich ([Dominic.Saavedra@heinrich.senate.gov](mailto:Dominic.Saavedra@heinrich.senate.gov)) or Anthony Sedillo with Sen. Udall ([Anthony.Sedillo@indian.senate.gov](mailto:Anthony.Sedillo@indian.senate.gov)) before the bill is introduced on Monday.

Thank you,  
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*Because there is Strength in Unity*

*USET/USET SPF staff are currently teleworking through May 1, 2020. We will continue to assess the COVID-19 situation and its impact on our operations. We ask for your patience should you experience any challenges reaching any one of our staff. Additionally, please be aware that the USET/USET SPF organization has created a COVID-19 Resource & Information page which is being updated on a frequent basis. <https://www.usetinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-Disease-LB.pdf>*