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March 20, 2020

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senator

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

The Honorable Denny Heck
United States Representative

Dear Senators Murray, Cantwell and Representative Heck

Thank you for your leadership and for moving swiftly to protect your constituents and millions of Americans as we face the global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are truly in uncharted territory and quick actions by Congress are essential to ensuring our eventual economic recovery. Like countless communities across the country, the City of Lacey is on the frontlines of this crisis and having to make difficult decisions to protect the health of our people. Cities are the economic engines of the U.S. economy and this crisis will hit them the hardest.

We understand there are ongoing discussions in Congress around the next phase of economic relief regarding direct payments to the American people to help them weather this economic storm. While the City of Lacey understands these discussions are well intentioned, we believe that if the federal government wants to provide the greatest help to those directly impacted, it should be moving to supplement the individual state's unemployment insurance accounts.

Should this crisis stretch on for months, a single check will not help families pay their mortgage, make car payments or feed their families. An improved unemployment insurance system in the states that can provide for quick and easy access to replace lost wages or salaries would ensure the American people remain financially stable through the crisis and would benefit those in greatest need and perhaps be a smarter and more efficient way to direct the funding.

Additionally, as Congress continues its work, we cannot forget about the backbone of our economy: small businesses. Small business owners are, and will continue to be, hit hard by this crisis. Congress must consider programs that can help them now and assist them to re-open their doors when this crisis passes. The Lacey City Council is committed to helping these partners with our existing strategic economic development funds, but we cannot do it all alone. We urge Congress to consider options such as converting federally-backed small business loans into loan forgiveness programs that can assist with payroll support.

Thank you, again, for your continued leadership and service to the State of Washington and the United States. Our community and countless others are depending on you and we appreciate your continued efforts.

Sincerely,

Andy Ryder
Mayor