Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

We urge you to recognize the importance of the Federal Impact Aid Program as you set the Appropriation Subcommittee’s funding priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. We fully recognize the fiscal restraint that will govern the Subcommittee’s actions this year, but we request strong and continued funding for all line items of the Impact Aid Program, including Basic Support and Federal Properties, to ensure all federally connected school districts can provide a quality education.

Congress created Impact Aid in 1950 in recognition that the federal government needed to accept responsibility in areas impacted by a federal presence and help meet the local responsibility of financing public education. Impact Aid provides a payment in lieu of taxes to local school districts for lost revenue that is a result of tax-exempt federal property and actions that have increased expenditures due to the enrollment of federally connected children. The program provides direct, flexible funding to over 1,200 school districts. Impact Aid funds a range of programs, including facilities renovation, efforts to retain highly qualified teachers, adequate technology, and maintenance of transportation fleets. For many districts, this funding represents the very lifeblood that allows their school system to operate.

Congress should prioritize Basic Support to ensure the current payout level to school districts is maintained. For districts enrolling military children, the ability to address both the academic and emotional needs of these students must be maintained. Education is a quality-of-life issue for military families, and it is our firm belief that as military personnel defend our country we must not forget or ignore the children they leave behind.

The needs of districts enrolling children who reside on Indian lands—of whom over 93 percent are Native American—also must not be overlooked. These districts strive to find creative ways to integrate curriculum and best practices to prepare students for success. Often, these school districts are located in rural areas with few taxpayers and where administrators double as bus drivers, teachers, and coaches. These dollars provide a foundational education program for all students; many schools would close their doors without the support of Impact Aid.

Federal Properties school districts depend on Impact Aid due to a limited local tax base caused by the presence of certain federal land in their districts, including national parks and grasslands, national laboratories, Army Corps of Engineers projects, and property that encompasses the
military academies. In some of these communities, the federal government is the largest landowner, which significantly diminishes a school district's revenue base. Congress should prioritize this funding stream to reflect the addition of eligible Federal Property school districts. We urge you to support strong and continued funding for the entire Impact Aid Program. The potential of long-term funding stagnation or program cuts is of serious concern given the changing needs of the program and the students they serve. Impact Aid is not only the federal government's obligation, but also a tax relief program for local communities. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Susan Davis
Member of Congress

Roger Williams
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

Don Bacon
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

Paul Cook
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Michael R. Tumer
Member of Congress
Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Kevin Brady  
Member of Congress

Dusty Johnson  
Member of Congress

Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

Elise M. Stefanik  
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress

Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress

Scott Tipton  
Member of Congress

Don Young  
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress

Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress

Anthony Brown  
Member of Congress
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

Denny Heck
Member of Congress

Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress

Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress
Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

TJ Cox
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

Daniel W. Lipinsky
Member of Congress

Greg Gianforte
Member of Congress

Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Terry McElroy
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Kendra S. Horn
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress
Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

Paul A. Gosar D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress