



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU**  
Governor

January 11, 2022

The Honorable Janet Yellen  
Secretary of the Treasury  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Yellen:

I am writing in follow up to my May 4, 2021 letter regarding Treasury's narrow limitations on how states may use funds allocated under the Emergency Rental Assistance program created by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (ERA1). Specifically, I cannot understate the critical need for New Hampshire to retain all funds allocated to the State under ERA1 and the need for the State to be allowed to deploy these funds in a manner that ensures a positive and generational impact for our most vulnerable communities throughout the Granite State.

Since March 15, 2021, New Hampshire has been providing eligible households financial assistance under the ERA programs. New Hampshire has consistently taken advantage of other flexibilities granted by Treasury to develop its rental assistance program to suit the needs of the state and local communities, while complying with the requirements set forth in applicable agreements, statutes, and guidance.

As a result of its collaborative and family focused approach, New Hampshire has provided over \$85,000,000 in rental and utility relief to Granite Staters through ERA 1 and 2. However, we believe this funding will have a much greater and longer-term positive impact on the State's working families if we are allowed to invest in our most critical housing related expense – the increase in building costs due to the pandemic. The housing shortage, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic, continues to put upward pressure on rents, further limiting affordable housing options for Granite Staters.

As we all know, a lack of affordable housing impacts all socioeconomic groups, but the greatest impact falls on those with more limited means and too often weighs heaviest on the shoulders of New Hampshire's working families. As such, I am requesting that Treasury provide additional flexibility for uses of "other housing related expenses due directly or indirectly to COVID-19" to better meet housing stability needs by allowing the State to use ERA1 funds to:

- Invest in affordable housing to offset the impact the pandemic has had on the supply of available rental units;

- Create incentives for public/private partnerships to advance development of affordable housing; and
- Reduce financial risk to incentivize development designed to benefit working families.

Providing states like New Hampshire flexibility to determine how to best use the funds given each state's unique challenges and circumstances is critical to meeting the underlying housing stability goals of the ERA program. Meeting those goals requires more than rental and utility relief at a household level. It must include efforts aimed at improving housing affordability and availability. In fact, the availability of affordable housing has decreased since the ERA program began.

With its remaining allocation and added flexibility, New Hampshire could change the long-term future course for families and communities that continue to struggle with housing insecurity. As such, I renew my request for flexibility in how New Hampshire may use remaining ERA1 funds, which is both contemplated and allowed under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu  
Governor of New Hampshire