



*State of New Jersey*  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY  
PO Box 080  
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0080

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

GURBIR S. GREWAL  
*Attorney General*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

March 31, 2020

*Via E-mail*

The Honorable Russell T. Vought  
Acting Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20503  
E-mail: [rvought@omb.eop.gov](mailto:rvought@omb.eop.gov); [Russell.t.vought@omb.eop.gov](mailto:Russell.t.vought@omb.eop.gov)

Dear Acting Director Vought:

As COVID-19, the disease caused by a novel coronavirus, has spread throughout the United States, the Secretary of Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency on January 31, 2020, and the President declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020. While the federal Government is mobilizing, state and local governments across the country have been wholly dedicated to responding to the emergency and combatting the spread of this deadly virus, and daily life in our communities has been upended by the need to maintain social distancing.

In light of these circumstances, we, the undersigned Attorneys General from New Jersey, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia, request that the Office of Management and Budget act now to prioritize regulations that are responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic, including its economic impact, while generally freezing all new and pending regulations other than those that address emergency situations or other urgent circumstances relating to health, safety, financial, or national security matters, or that are required by statutory or judicial deadlines. We also request that you direct the heads of all executive departments and agencies to do the same.

The need to prioritize regulations responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic should be self-evident. Indeed, we understand that you already have given federal agencies a general instruction to "take appropriate steps to prioritize all resources to slow the transmission of COVID-19, while ensuring [the federal Government's] mission-critical activities continue." See Memorandum for



the Heads of Departments and Agencies from Russell T. Vought, Acting Director of OMB, re: Federal Agency Operational Alignment to Slow the Spread of Coronavirus COVID-19 (Mar. 17, 2020).

Our proposed freeze of other non-emergency, non-urgent regulations not required by statutory or judicial deadlines would be substantially identical to the freeze that the Administration adopted on the first day of President Trump's term of office. *See* Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies from Reince Priebus, Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, re: Regulatory Freeze Pending Review (Jan. 20, 2017). We appreciate that some federal agencies have already moved in this direction by extending the open comment periods for rule proposals unrelated to COVID-19. Agencies also should consider reopening closed comment periods, at an appropriate time and for an appropriate duration, to enable commenters to provide new information related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including its economic impact.

Taking these steps would help to ensure that all appropriate federal resources are directed towards the present public health and national emergencies and that the federal Government does not unnecessarily take steps that would call for action by state or local governments, by businesses and other organizations affected by the current emergencies, or by our residents, whose ability to meet and communicate with each other has been limited by measures adopted in response to the emergencies.

We appreciate your attention to our request at this difficult time for our country.

Sincerely,



GURBIR S. GREWAL  
New Jersey Attorney General



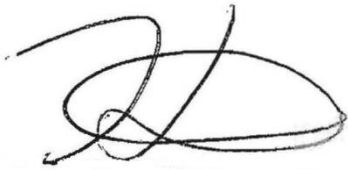
PHILIP J. WEISER  
Colorado Attorney General



WILLIAM TONG  
Connecticut Attorney General



KATHLEEN JENNINGS  
Delaware Attorney General



KARL A. RACINE  
District of Columbia Attorney General



CLARE E. CONNORS  
Hawaii Attorney General



TOM MILLER  
Attorney General of Iowa



AARON M. FREY  
Maine Attorney General



BRIAN E. FROSH  
Maryland Attorney General



MAURA T. HEALY  
Massachusetts Attorney General



DANA NESSEL  
Michigan Attorney General



KEITH ELLISON  
Minnesota Attorney General



AARON D. FORD  
Nevada Attorney General



HECTOR BALDERAS  
New Mexico Attorney General



LETITIA JAMES  
New York Attorney General



JOSHUA H. STEIN  
North Carolina Attorney General



ELLEN F. ROSENBLUM  
Oregon Attorney General



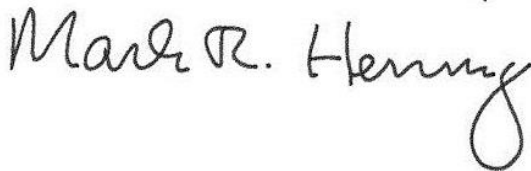
JOSH SHAPIRO  
Pennsylvania Attorney General



PETER NERONHA  
Rhode Island Attorney General



THOMAS J. DONOVAN, JR.  
Vermont Attorney General



MARK R. HERRING  
Attorney General of Virginia