

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 30, 2020

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

We are deeply concerned that Maine's Center for Disease Control, health care professionals, public health officials, and first responders report that the state is struggling with persistent shortages of essential personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing supplies. The current supply is simply insufficient to support Maine's needs, and the State is facing critical challenges in obtaining the necessary PPE and testing supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS).

As the oldest state in the nation by median age, Maine is particularly vulnerable to the direst impacts of COVID-19. The State's proximity to more densely populated areas with active hotspots also makes it a potential refuge destination and increases the risk of spread. Given your role as the head of the Department overseeing FEMA and its coordination of the federal COVID-19 response, I urge you to ensure that Maine receives the essential supplies and support needed to care for those suffering from COVID-19 and protect the many more at risk, including our health care workers and first responders.

In his March 26th press briefing, President Trump announced that there is discretion to send the SNS supplies "directly to the point where we want [them]." The President also stated that FEMA has tremendous amounts of equipment coming in and that it is sending more PPE out every day. As such, we join Maine Governor Janet Mills in urging your Department to increase deliveries to our state of PPE, testing equipment, and testing reagents from the SNS. Further, we request that FEMA provide us with clarity on the formula it is using to set the amounts of PPE that it distributes from the SNS to each state that it is assisting.

There are several ways in which FEMA, in conjunction with other federal agencies, can increase both the amount and frequency of SNS emergency supply deliveries. The CARES Act, signed into law on March 27, 2020, provides \$16 billion for the Strategic National Stockpile, which includes procuring PPE, ventilators, and other critical supplies for federal and state response efforts. Further, with the declaration of a national emergency and invocation of the Stafford Act, the President empowered FEMA to tap into federal disaster relief funding, including the \$45 billion allocated by Congress in the CARES Act. Under the COVID-19 Emergency Declaration, FEMA is authorized to "ensure that resource constraints do not inhibit efforts to respond to this unprecedented disaster." Finally, on March 27, 2020, the President

invoked the Defense Production Act to help address the current shortage of certain medical supplies and equipment necessary to protect all Americans. We urge FEMA to take immediate actions to dispatch the necessary supplies to Maine.

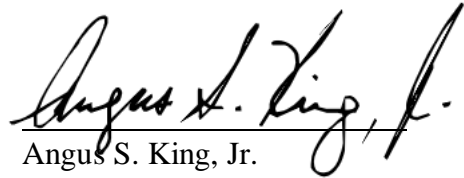
The number of COVID-19 cases in Maine is increasing rapidly, and current resources are insufficient to meet the expected demand. Keeping our doctors, nurses, and other first responders protected and healthy is critical to our health system's ability to manage the increased number of patients they will treat in the upcoming days and weeks. PPE and other emergency supplies, including test kits and reagents, are what allow our health care workers on the frontlines to care for those who have, or are suspected to have, COVID-19, and they are critical to helping our nation overcome this pandemic.

Thank you for your work in protecting Americans during this challenging time. We look forward to working with you to meet the urgent need to protect the health and safety of our health care workforce and first responders during this crisis.

Sincerely,



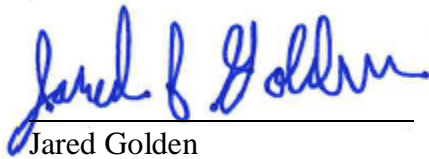
Susan M. Collins
U.S. Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
U.S. Senator



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Jared Golden
Member of Congress