



**NYSAC**  
NEW YORK STATE  
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

---

540 Broadway, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Albany, New York 12207 | Phone: (518) 465-1473 | Fax: (518) 465-0506 | [www.nysac.org](http://www.nysac.org)

President: Hon. John F. Marren, Ontario County | Executive Director: Stephen J. Acquario, Esq.

May 28, 2020

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Majority Leader  
New York State Senate

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie  
Speaker  
New York State Assembly

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie:

Thank you for your partnership with county governments through this global pandemic.

As New York State begins to consider cuts to balance its budget during this time of uncertainty, we urge you to preserve aid to county governments. Counties, too, have been devastated by the necessary shutdown of the economy, but we continue to lead the local public health and economic response to COVID-19.

Counties face a quadruple threat of:

1. Declining local revenues: sales occupancy, mortgage recording taxes and gaming revenues.
2. Higher spending necessary to respond to the health and social service emergency
3. The loss of state reimbursement; and
4. Significant losses for small businesses on our main streets that could threaten jobs and the property tax base.

NYSAC's most recent [Coronavirus Economic Impact Report](#) projects that counties outside New York City will face revenue losses of over \$2 billion and the potential of another \$1.5 billion in state budget cuts, which represents 16 percent of all county revenues.

In the face of these revenue losses, we are required under state law to fully fund and administer all state and federal programs which comprise the bulk of our budgets, where caseloads are increasing, and as if there has been no change in our revenue forecast. Any further cuts to county revenues at this time will put county finances at severe risk.

Now is not the time for across the board cuts. Now is the time to innovate. Now is the time to examine how we deliver and fund programs and services in this state. Now is the time to

rebuild stronger, smarter governments for the good of all New Yorkers. Before you finalize your work for the 2020 Legislative Session, we encourage you to remain steadfast in your support of counties, and more importantly the services that we provide and the people we serve.

We propose the creation of a Rebuilding Government for Good Commission, which can be charged with identifying cost saving measures that will reform government operations while ensuring local services are preserved or enhanced at no additional cost to state or local taxpayers. We recommend that counties, as the state's partner in delivering and funding health and human services to New Yorkers, play an active role on this commission.

As the Legislature approaches the end of the scheduled session, we are hopeful that you can fulfill a do no harm approach for counties to ensure we can fulfill our mission for our mutual constituents in this time of great uncertainty.

Thank you for your leadership during this pandemic. We look forward to working with you to use this crisis to create a better, stronger New York that finds new effective and efficient ways to provide the services our residents depend on.

Respectfully, your partner in government,



John F. Marren  
President  
Chairman, Ontario County Board of Supervisors

CC: Members of the NYS Senate  
Members of the NYS Assembly  
County Chief Elected Officials

*Committed to counties since 1925*

*Albany, Allegany, Bronx, Broome, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Dutchess, Erie, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Kings, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, Nassau, New York, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Orange, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, Putnam, Rensselaer, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Suffolk, Sullivan, Tioga, Tompkins, Ulster, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Westchester, Wyoming, Yates*