

County of Aroostook

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

RYAN D. PELLETIER



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

**PAUL J. UNDERWOOD
PRESQUE ISLE**

**NORMAN L. FOURNIER
WALLAGRASS**

**WILLIAM T. DOBBINS
HOULTON**

May 13, 2024

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

On behalf of the 67,105 residents of Aroostook County, we urge you to oppose the Congressional Review Act (CRA) joint resolution of disapproval of the Obligation Interim Final Rule (IFR) published by the U.S. Department of Treasury (Treasury) in November 2023. The Obligation IFR provides states and local governments with critical guidance related to the statutory December 31, 2024, deadline for recipients to obligate American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF).

The \$350 billion SLFRF provided \$65.1 billion in direct aid to every county, parish and borough in America and since 2021, counties have been using these critical funds to meet the unique needs of our residents and support long-term economic growth. In Aroostook County, Recovery Funds have been used to provide much needed upgrades to many water and sewer infrastructures; upgrades to HVAC systems and building renovations; increasing the quality and expansion of rural broadband; and emergency and safety equipment for various ambulance, fire, and law enforcement agencies.

Aroostook County and other SLFRF recipients are required by law to obligate all SLFRF dollars by December 31, 2024. Treasury's November 2023 Obligation IFR provides SLFRF recipients to use these funds for payroll costs associated with compliance and reporting personnel through the December 31, 2026, expenditure deadline. Additionally, the IFR provides counties with the parameters in which we can terminate contracts and re-obligate funds beyond the obligation date, which is a crucial flexibility as workforce shortages and supply chain delays persist. Lastly, the Obligation IFR provides subrecipients with the flexibility to re-obligate funds through the expenditure deadline, which is critical to continue the administration of ARPA funded programs through the expenditure deadline.

In short, overturning Treasury's Obligation IFR would limit our ability to use funds for payroll for compliance and reporting personnel and our ability to re-obligate funds in the case a contract is unable to fulfil their obligation. Additionally, it would require that subrecipients obligate funds by December 31, 2024, instead of throughout the expenditure deadline as allowed by the IFR. Without the flexibilities

provided through the Obligation IFR, Aroostook County and many others across the country may have difficulty coming into compliance with ARPA statute and regulations laid out in Treasury's Final Rule.

Thank you for your continued service to Aroostook County. We thank you for your partnership and respectfully ask that you oppose the CRA joint disapproval resolution that would overturn Treasury's Obligation IFR.

Sincerely,

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Norman Fournier
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