



HENRY McMASTER
GOVERNOR

March 12, 2020

The Honorable Harvey Peeler
The Honorable Hugh K. Leatherman
South Carolina Senate
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

The Honorable James H. "Jay" Lucas
The Honorable Murrell Smith
South Carolina House of Representatives
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Gentlemen:

As you are aware, the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has been working diligently to provide state and local officials as well as the public with accurate professional information and guidance concerning the COVID-19 virus.

DHEC protocols and procedures require the agency to prepare for a variety of contingencies and situations. This requires that the agency identify and secure - in advance - the necessary resources, equipment and personnel to successfully address these contingencies.

Therefore, I request the General Assembly consider a joint resolution to appropriate up to \$45 million from the Contingency Reserve Fund for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 to DHEC for coordination of the state's public health response to the COVID-19 virus. Any funds not expended by DHEC should be returned to the Contingency Reserve Fund upon completion of the department's efforts.

The \$45 million amount may be deducted from the \$128 million one-time taxpayer credit contained in the FY 2020-21 General Appropriations Act passed by the House of Representatives. This credit would not be available to state taxpayers until they file their taxes in 2021. At this time, I believe these one-time surplus dollars should be utilized now to provide DHEC with funds, to the extent necessary, to address COVID-19 in South Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working together to solve this critical issue.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Henry McMaster".

Henry McMaster