July 30, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) – the association of the business of engineering – we write to express our strong support for congressional action on legislation to spur additional economic relief during the pandemic, as well as highlight key priorities for the nation’s engineering industry.

ACEC is strongly supportive of a number of provisions included in the House-passed HEROES Act and the recently released HEALS Act in the Senate. As you work to develop a final bipartisan package, ACEC respectfully urges you to include the following initiatives:

- **$37 billion in federal-aid highway funding for State DOTs** to backstop projected revenue losses, as well as a waiver for one year of the 20 percent non-federal matching requirement.
- **$32 billion in assistance to transit agencies throughout the country**, to address serious revenue shortfalls resulting from the pandemic.
- **Assistance to drinking water and wastewater systems is needed**, as utilities are anticipating an estimated $30 billion shortfall in revenues due to COVID-19; ACEC strongly supports assistance through existing federal programs, including the State Revolving Fund (SRF) program, and also supports targeted assistance to ratepayers impacted by job loss and economic hardship resulting from the pandemic.
- **$10 billion for the Airport Improvement Program (AIP)** to assist the nation’s airports.
- **A correction of IRS guidance to clarify congressional intent that expenses covered by PPP loan forgiveness are also tax deductible**, which will provide needed tax relief for small and mid-sized engineering firms across the country.
- **Liability safe harbor for employers** that take reasonable efforts to comply with mandatory coronavirus standards and regulations. This limited liability protection will provide certainty to engineering firms as they reopen their workplaces.
- **Enhanced employee retention tax credit (ERTC)**, and the provision allowing employers that received a PPP loan to also use the ERTC, are important provisions that will help engineering firms continue to keep people on payroll.
Extending the PPP loan program, providing a simplified loan forgiveness process for small PPP loans, and allowing 501(c)6 trade associations to participate in the program are welcome updates.

These represent critical near-term priorities for our industry and for the nation, but we also respectfully urge Congress to move forward with the development of a bipartisan, long-term infrastructure-based recovery package that will stimulate economic growth and promote jobs at a time when over 17 million Americans struggle on unemployment rolls. Such legislation should include a robust reauthorization of the FAST Act with sustainable and growing revenues, passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), as well as additional bipartisan provisions to promote the energy sector and private development in a sustainable manner.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let me know if we can provide you with additional information or assistance in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Linda Bauer Darr
President & CEO