

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641

July 6, 2020

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
Governor
State of Michigan
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on Tuesday, June 2, 2020, at the remote hearing entitled “On the Front Line: How Governors are Battling the COVID-19 Pandemic.” We appreciate the time and effort you gave as a witness before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Pursuant to Rule 3 of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, members are permitted to submit additional questions to the witnesses for their responses, which will be included in the hearing record. Attached are questions directed to you from members of the Committee. In preparing your answers to these questions, please address your responses to the member who has submitted the questions using the Word document provided with this letter.

To facilitate the publication of the hearing record, please submit your responses to these questions by no later than the close of business on Monday, July 20, 2020. As previously noted, your responses to the questions in this letter, as well as the responses from the other witnesses appearing at the hearing, will all be included in the hearing record. Your responses should be transmitted by email in the Word document provided with this letter to Benjamin Tabor with the Committee staff (benjamin.tabor@mail.house.gov). A paper copy of your responses is not required. Using the Word document provided for submitting your responses will also help maintain the proper format for incorporating your answers into the hearing record.

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
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Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. If you need additional information or have other questions, please have your staff contact Mr. Tabor at (202) 225-2927.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank Pallone, Jr." in a cursive style.

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman

Attachment

cc: Hon. Greg Walden, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Hon. Diana DeGette, Chair
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Hon. Brett Guthrie, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

**Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations**

**Hearing on
“On the Front Line: How Governors are Battling the COVID-19 Pandemic”**

June 2, 2020

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer, Governor, State of Michigan

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis (R-FL)

1. The Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act included \$11 billion for states and local governments for purposes related to COVID-19 testing, including support for use by employers or in other settings
 - a. What role are employers playing in your state in your COVID-19 testing strategy as businesses begin to re-open in your state?
 - b. What, if any, challenges have employers shared with you that limit their ability to increase COVID-19 testing as employees return to the office?
2. Committee Republicans released a paper on COVID-19 testing and surveillance, highlighting among other things, the importance of surveillance in a pandemic.
 - a. What surveillance efforts are underway in your state for COVID-19?
 - b. Are these surveillance systems new, or are they pre-existing systems that are being leveraged for COVID-19?
 - i. If they are pre-existing systems, what other illnesses do they track?
 - c. How do these systems report up to HHS/CDC?
 - d. How often does your state’s system(s) report to the CDC? Real time, daily, weekly?
3. According to the CDC, the U.S. COVID-19 surveillance goals are to: (1) monitor the spread and intensity of COVID-19 disease in the U.S.; (2) understand disease severity and the spectrum of illness; (3) understand risk factors for severe disease and transmission; (4) monitor for changes in the virus that causes COVID-19; (5) estimate disease burden; and (6) produce data for forecasting COVID-19 spread and impact.
 - a. Do you feel that the surveillance systems in your state are sufficient to meet all of these goals?

- i. If not, what improvements do you think need to be made?
4. One of the keys to Florida’s success was its early deferment to local officials who were able to use local data to inform a community-tailored approach instead of a “one-size fits the state” solution.
 - a. How important is local input and engagement in a responsible phased reopening?
 - b. How do current data models you’re consulting account for policy nuances like a regional patchwork of stay-at-home orders in your state or input from hospitals and doctors?

The Honorable Tim Walberg (R-MI)

1. On May 19th, the Edenville Dam failed after heavy rains, resulting in catastrophic flooding and the evacuation of approximately 10,000 residents in the areas downstream of the dam. This dam was under State jurisdiction, with a known history of safety violations. In October 2018, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission revoked its hydropower license, but the State of Michigan continued to let it operate under dangerous conditions.
 - a. Governor Whitmer, is it true that your state dam safety inspectors sent emails raising concerns that the dam did not meet safety standards in January of this year?
 - i. If not, when did safety inspectors become aware of the dam’s safety issues?
 - b. In May, Attorney General Nessel filed a lawsuit against the dam’s operator alleging they illegally lowered the lake level threatening the health of the lake’s mussel population.
 - i. With all the safety warnings about this dam, why did the Attorney General continue with a lawsuit, ordering the operators to raise the lake levels in order to save mussels?