

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 1, 2020

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024-2523

Dear Administrator Gaynor:

Thank you for the assistance the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has provided to the state of Wisconsin during the COVID-19 pandemic. FEMA's support has been critical to our ability to effectively respond to this crisis, which is why we write to express our concern about the amount and usability of the medical and testing supplies FEMA has delivered to Wisconsin.

At the request of Region V FEMA Administrator James Joseph, Wisconsin's Governor sent an updated letter to FEMA on April 30, 2020 laying out the state's request for supplies to combat the COVID-19 crisis including N95 masks, medical gowns, gloves and testing supplies. Please see the table attached to this letter outlining what Wisconsin has requested and what it has received over the last month.

While FEMA has provided significant materials including over 358,600 N-95 masks, 159,000 medical gloves, and thousands of surgical masks to Wisconsin, in some cases the quantity of supplies received is far less than what the state requested. For instance, Wisconsin has requested 273,631 surgical gowns but has received none. Last week, the state had less than one week's worth of medical gowns on hand. More than two months into this national emergency, this is unacceptable.

We also have serious concerns with the usability of some of swabs and viral transport tubes FEMA shipped to Wisconsin. On May 11th, the President announced a plan to provide weekly shipments of swabs and viral transport tubes to each state for their testing needs for May and June. While this was extremely welcome news, we recently learned that a majority of the swabs and transport vials shipped to Wisconsin are unusable. For example, 17,000 saline tubes are too short to transport the nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs used for the majority of COVID-19 tests, and

67,983 foam applicators cannot be used for NP swabs. More than 60 days into a national emergency, these mistakes cannot continue to be made – they will cost human lives.

In addition to these concerns, we remain frustrated by the lack of support for clinical and private labs in Wisconsin, including a serious need for reagents from the federal government. FEMA has blanketly declined to support the state's request for any testing supplies, other than swabs, and referred Wisconsin to the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) International Reagent Resource (IRR). This is not an adequate response. The CDC will only support supplies for Wisconsin's two state public health labs, yet the majority of labs conducting COVID-19 tests are clinical or private labs experiencing severe shortages of reagents. This is a concern we have heard from colleagues around the country. Therefore, we urge you to reconsider FEMA's role in supporting the stability of the reagent supply chain to ensure states can safely re-open and implement the President's National Testing Plan recommendation to have each state conducting diagnostic tests on at least two percent of their population this month.

Again, thank you for your work to help our nation combat COVID-19. We urge you to immediately provide surgical gowns to Wisconsin, and to ensure that the weekly shipments of swabs and vials being shipped to Wisconsin for testing capacity are actually useable for COVID-19 diagnostic tests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Pocan'.

Mark Pocan

Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tammy Baldwin'.

Tammy Baldwin

U.S. Senator

Governor Ever's Request to FEMA on April 30th

Requested Item	Quantity Requested	Quantity Sent by FEMA as of May 29 th	Date Received
N95 Respirators	238,363	358,600	240 May 4 th ; 25,000 May 15 th ; 204,000 May 18 th ; 1,000 May 26 th ; 960 May 27 th ; 127,400 May 29 th
Non-Surgical Masks	190,326	3,000	2,000 May 26 th ; 500 May 27 th ; 500 May 28 th
Adult Surgical Masks	1,259,890	459,700 KN90/KN95 masks	5,000 May 8 th ; 200,000 May 13 th ; 1,200 May 15 th ; 150,000 May 21 st ; 500 May 26 th ; 103,000 May 27 th
Face Shields	70,897	70,400	69,200 May 19 th ; 600 May 20 th ; 500 May 26 th
Surgical Gowns	273,631	0	
Coveralls	73,016	10,000	Week of May 18 th
Medical Gloves	3,889,819	159,000	147,000 May 12 th ; 6,000 May 13 th ; 6,000 May 14 th
Swabs	260,000	97,520 (210,000 expected in May & June)	13,500 in Early May 31,500 May 12 th 52,520 May 25 th

Breakdown of Swabs & Usability Issues

Type of Item	Quantity Received as of May 29 th	Usability Issues
Saline Tubes	17,000	Too short for Nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs
Foam Applicators	67,983	Cannot be used as NP swabs, not widely useable by labs.
Molecular Transport Medium (MTM)	19,600	Not approved for use in most test systems. Tubes are too short to fit NP swabs.
Cotton Swabs	5,040	Cannot be used on the PCR tests, the most commonly used COVID-19 test platform right now.
Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swabs	14,000	This is what Wisconsin needs & more of them.
Abbott i-Stat EC8+ Cartridges	1,875	Not useable on the COVID-19 Abbott diagnostic platform.

Testing Supplies Wisconsin Requested in April 30th that FEMA will not fulfill

Type of Item	Quantity Requested
Reagents	290,400
Plasticware	180,000
Extraction Reagents	180,000
Cartridges	20,000
Hologic Tests	459,500
Roche Disposable Plasticware	108,000
Easy Mag Extractor Reagents	11,500
Primer Probe Enzymes	11,500