

March 6, 2020

Mr. Larry Kudlow
Director, National Economic Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Kudlow,

As the Administration considers federal intervention to temporarily assist the airline, travel and other targeted industries impacted by the COVID-19, or coronavirus, epidemic, ASAE urges you to include tax-exempt associations suffering from event cancellations and reduced meetings attendance in any federal aid package.

The American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) is the nation's largest organization representing the interests of trade and professional associations. ASAE has over 47,000 members in the U.S. and in 50 countries worldwide. Part of ASAE's mission is to advocate on legislative, regulatory and legal issues that directly impact or have the potential to impact the broad association community.

More than 1.9 million meetings occur in the United States each year, with more than 250 million attendees, according to the Events Industry Council's 2018 [Economic Significant Study](#) conducted by Oxford Economics. These meetings contribute more than \$446 billion to U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) and directly support 5.9 million jobs in the U.S.

As you are no doubt aware, the fast-spreading COVID-19 epidemic has prompted the cancellation of dozens of major meetings and events in the U.S. already, and forced other event sponsors to consider cancelling or postponing innumerable other events dependent on in-person attendance at convention centers, hotels and other event facilities across the nation. Many of these meetings and events also attract international participants, who generate 11.5 percent (about \$38 billion) of direct spending during their visits to the U.S. International travel to the U.S. has dropped sharply during the COVID-19 outbreak and signs point to this trend continuing until the virus is brought under control. The U.S. Travel Association forecasts that international flights to the U.S. will plummet 6 percent over the next three months alone, which would be the largest decline since the 2008 economic crisis.

ASAE is doing its best to provide the association community with resources and advice on mitigating losses with hotel and vendor contracts and insurance options if conferences, trade shows or other in-person events must be cancelled or attendance is greatly diminished, but meetings are the lifeblood for many associations and tax credits or other federal assistance are greatly needed to protect associations' limited revenue streams and ensure tax-exempt organizations can continue to fulfill their important missions to the benefit of society.

Additionally, many associations operate similarly to small businesses and are greatly impacted if employees are forced to take sick leave or quarantined as a result of COVID-19 interaction. We are aware that the Administration is considering measures for small businesses that may require cash flow assistance amid the outbreak, and ask that tax-exempt entities not be excluded from any temporary aid designed to stem the economic fallout resulting from COVID-19.

In the interests of assisting the Administration in understanding the impact of the COVID-19 threat on associations, ASAE requests a meeting with you and appropriate White House officials to ensure any emergency measures to boost the economy during this epidemic are timely and appropriately targeted. Thank you for your consideration and if you have questions or wish to arrange a meeting, please contact Mary Kate Cunningham, ASAE's Vice President of Public Policy, at 202-626-2703 or mcunningham@asaecenter.org.

Sincerely,



Susan Robertson, CAE
President and CEO