



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-0001

October 25, 2024

The Honorable Brian Schatz, Chairman
The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Steve Womack, Chairman
The Honorable Mike Quigley, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Schatz, Chairman Womack, Ranking Member Hyde-Smith, and Ranking Member Quigley:

Within the past year, Americans have witnessed an unprecedented rise in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters—from wildfires in Maui and across the West, tornadoes ravaging entire communities, floods in every corner of the country, and severe storms such as Hurricanes Helene and Milton that left trails of destruction across the Southeast and Appalachia. Simply put, communities across America are in desperate need of help to fully recover from these life changing events. As Congress considers the next supplemental funding package, it is critical that Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle stand with millions of Americans who deserve Federal support. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program, which provides communities the funding they need to rebuild, must be included in a comprehensive disaster relief funding package upon Congress's return in November.

With the support of CDBG-DR program funds, communities across America can build the foundation for recovery from extreme weather events by:

- Building back homes with resilience so homeowners and renters can return quickly and with the confidence that their homes are more protected from the next storm;
- Supporting local businesses to rebuild facilities, increasing workforce training opportunities for residents to access quality jobs and drive local economies;
- Rebuilding essential community buildings such as schools, hospitals, and fire stations; and
- Enhancing the resilience of housing-related infrastructure, by focusing on renewable energy sources, efficient water and sewer systems, and other mitigation measures to reduce future disaster risks.

Beginning with Hurricanes Andrew and Iniki in 1992, Congress has supported communities in the aftermath of the worst disasters through the CDBG-DR program, appropriating over \$100 billion for long term disaster recovery. Congress acted and responded to some of the most catastrophic disasters in the Nation's history, such as providing over \$20 billion in CDBG-DR disaster supplemental funding for gulf coast hurricane recovery for Hurricanes Katrina, Wilma and Rita; \$16 billion for Hurricane Sandy; and almost \$36 billion for recovery and mitigation needs as a result of Harvey, Irma, Maria and other disasters. Congress also responded to smaller yet no less devastating disasters such as for Joplin, Missouri and Minot, North Dakota, providing a combined \$262 million to come back stronger after catastrophic tornadoes and flooding. This community-focused funding has helped build a better future.

Over the past few weeks, the Biden-Harris Administration has provided robust and well-coordinated Federal support for the ongoing response and recovery efforts. During my recent visit to Asheville, North Carolina, I met with a small business owner to hear firsthand how Hurricane Helene impacted the community and what the most pressing needs were for him. He made clear his hope to rebuild and shared his thoughts on how the Federal government can (and must) help. As articulated in the June 28, 2024 [Letter Regarding Critical Supplemental Funding Needs](#) from Office of Management & Budget Director Shalanda Young and the October 4, 2024 [Letter to Congress on Disaster Needs](#) from President Biden, we must act now to bring resources to impacted communities across the country and those that are at risk of potential natural disasters.

While the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Relief Fund supports emergency response and repair efforts and the Small Business Administration's Disaster Loans provide relief to business owners, non-profits, homeowners and renters, CDBG-DR offers flexible support for remaining unmet recovery needs for housing, infrastructure, and economic development. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is working diligently to develop needs estimates from the recent hurricanes given the critical role CDBG-DR and other Federal relief programs play in community recovery.

I urge you to act with all appropriate speed and provide necessary funds so that the people, families, businesses, and communities affected by Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton—as well as those still recovering from past disasters—are not only made whole but can proceed in a way to make them more resilient in the face of future extreme weather events and other disasters. In addition to rebuilding housing, the Administration urges Congress to provide more funding for communities to support farmers and ranchers with crop losses, to address impacted schools, and to repair damaged highways. I look forward to working with you as we support these communities through their recovery.

Sincerely,



Adrienne Todman
Acting Secretary

cc:
The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair
The Honorable Susan M. Collins, Ranking Member
The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member