

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1806

January 6, 2022

The Honorable Marcia L. Fudge
Secretary
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Fudge:

When Hurricane Ida made landfall in Louisiana at the peak of its strength on August 31, 2021, it hammered communities across Louisiana's coastline with sustained Category 4-strength winds and some gusts exceeding 190 mph. The strength of this windstorm was largely unprecedented: it ripped roofs away from homes, tore down electrical poles and transmissions, knocked seafaring vessels loose in the Mississippi, and uprooted trees in 25 of Louisiana's southern parishes. Given the severity of the damage caused by Hurricane Ida, Congress acted with haste to pass Public Law 117-43 and appropriate \$5 billion to the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery fund on September 30 – a mere 31 days after Ida first struck Louisiana. I am writing today to urge that you recognize that sense of urgency and promptly publish the CDBG-DR allocations for Hurricane Ida.

On November 1, 2021, HUD published a Federal Register Notice allocating more than \$2 billion in CDBG-DR and CDBG-Mitigation funds from P.L. 117-43 to ten states impacted by major disasters in 2020. While these 2020-disaster funds finally appropriated by Congress are long overdue, it is vital that your agency react with the same urgency that disaster victims feel after having their lives turned upside down. In the aftermath of a disaster, disruptive changes happen quickly: our federal response needs to expedite recovery, not jeopardize it.

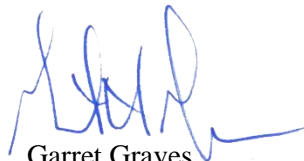
Over three months have passed since the enactment of the law providing these funds. Publishing the allocations for the remaining \$3 billion is only the first step that must be taken before dollars can reach victims of 2021 disasters: states must write action plans, which must then be approved by HUD, and then each amendment to the action plan must go through this same iterative process. States have to stand up programs to administer these block grants and disaster victims must go through the arduous process of applying for funds. From appropriation to checks in hand, this process can take from 9 months to over a year. It is critical that the Department of Housing and Urban Development take urgent action

now to get the ball in motion for victims of Hurricane Ida. Anything less would be a disservice to the disaster victims who are trying to rebuild their lives.

Hurricane Ida rapidly intensified as it struck Louisiana with a deadly combination of high-speed winds, a 15-foot storm surge, and heavy rainfall, before weakening as it moved northeast across the United States. Louisiana's coastline bore the brunt of the worst of the storm, which devastated homes and businesses across the southern portion of the state and left more than one million people in Louisiana without power for weeks. I am grateful for the swift actions of President Biden and Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Criswell to promptly declare a major disaster declaration that began making FEMA funds available for recovery as soon as the storm moved out. I respectfully request that the Department of Housing and Urban Development act swiftly to publish the allocations for 2021 disasters so our communities can recover from this historic hurricane.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this time-sensitive request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Garret Graves', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Garret Graves
Member of Congress