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Commissioner George P. Bush  
Texas General Land Office  
1700 N. Congress Ave.  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Commissioner Bush:

I welcome the opportunity to submit my comments on the State of Texas Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Mitigation Action Plan (Draft State Action Plan) put forth by the Texas General Land Office (GLO) for the funds Congress appropriated for the purpose of funding mitigation projects in the regions in Texas affected by Hurricane Harvey. This plan is an important step toward addressing our disaster mitigation needs, and I thank you and your team for your efforts and commitment to making our communities more resilient.

As the representative for Texas' Seventh Congressional District, one of the areas most devastated during Hurricane Harvey, I am acutely aware of the history and intent of the funds Congress appropriated for disaster recovery after Harvey. I have worked with my colleagues in our delegation to expedite the release of these funds to the state because they are critically needed, in my district in Houston and Harris County, and in other areas still recovering from Harvey.

After reviewing and consulting my constituents and others about the plan, I write to you with great concern that the Draft State Action Plan does not fulfill the purpose intended by the Congress and fails the communities most in need of these funds. I ask that you review and reconsider the following areas of the Draft State Action Plan and implement the recommended changes before the final plan is submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

**1. Joint Applications from Regional Entities (Section 4.4.3)**

HUD, the GLO, and local partners have encouraged large-scale cooperation between regional entities for projects as the fastest, and most cost efficient, way to build more resilient communities. But the Draft State Action Plan unnecessarily discourages this collaboration. By designating every entity within a joint application as a first-round applicant (counting against the three total project cap) the GLO will significantly handicap our region's ability to combine resources for larger, more regional projects. For example, smaller cities or sponsors working together to qualify for the \$5 million minimum for the Hurricane Harvey State Mitigation Competition will be disqualified from any further project investments. Instead of three projects per county, the region will only have three total projects if entities work together. Rather than encourage cooperation, this plan will discourage it.

**2. The Three-Project Application Limit (Section 4.4.3)**

The three-project application limit will negatively impact the areas most in need and the local sponsors most prepared to take on the large-scale regional projects the plan encourages. In my district, for example, Harris County Flood Control District has the expertise and resources to address many mitigation projects, and is a capable and needed partner for sponsors of projects of all sizes. This limit creates a serious and unnecessary impediment. Moreover, not all areas require three projects, and those most impacted by Hurricane Harvey in southeast Texas will require more than just three projects to recover and mitigate future storm damage. The regions most affected will require more projects and more funding to become more resilient. Please permit entities to apply for needed projects without an arbitrary cap.

**3. The \$100 Million Per Project Cap (Section 4.4.3.4)**

In addition to the three-project cap, the \$100 million award cap for Hurricane Harvey State Mitigation Competition applications fails to enable adequate mitigation work in the communities that need it most. In Houston and Harris County alone the damages are in the billions of dollars. Again, under this plan, an entity like Harris County Flood Control District, which is charged with reducing flood risk and damage for our region in 22 different watersheds, would be eligible at most for projects totaling \$300 million under the combined project and dollar caps. I am certain this was not the intention of the plan, or of the Congress.

**4. Limits on Project Applications Before Statewide Funding is Complete (Section 4.4.3)**

Placing a limit on the number of project applications for each entity before full statewide funding is complete will slow down the recovery effort in regions that already have planned projects. In our area, we have already identified many projects that should begin as quickly as possible and are quite developed. By allowing entities to develop multiple solutions at once, we can more quickly proceed with land acquisition, design, contract-bidding, and other time-consuming steps that delay relief. Reducing the timeframe for continued project development must be a component of the Final State Action Plan.

We all want to see fast, efficient, and meaningful flood mitigation in our state. Unfortunately, the Draft State Action Plan does not sufficiently enable the critical work identified in Houston and Harris County, consistent with the intent of the Congress that appropriated this funding.

I appreciate the opportunity to meet with your team and to provide these written comments on the Draft State Action Plan. I look forward to continuing our dialogue so that we can work together for the people we serve.

Sincerely,



Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress