

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2021

The Honorable Marcia L. Fudge
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th St. S.W.
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Fudge,

As Members of Congress from the Greater Houston area and the State of Texas, we write you with great concern regarding the Texas General Land Office's (GLO) recent announcement for the distribution of the first tranche of Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) Program funds. On Friday, May 21, 2021, GLO announced its first tranche of planned funding distributions for its competitive grant program, with an inexplicable **zero** percent of that funding going to either the City of Houston or Harris County, the epicenter of Hurricane Harvey.

These funds were originally appropriated by Congress in February 2018, in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-123), with \$4.3 billion allotted for recovery aid to Texas for Hurricane Harvey. The State Action Plan, approved by HUD under the Trump administration, established a competitive grant program that GLO claimed would reward the projects which would help the most Texans with the greatest need in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, going to projects that would benefit those hit hardest by the storm.

Houston has experienced seven federally declared disasters in six years, impacting hundreds of thousands of citizens. Harris County, which includes the City of Houston, is the only identified county in the State of Texas to experience consecutive flooding disasters in 2015, 2016, and 2017. In August of 2017, Hurricane Harvey paralyzed our region, dumping nearly 60 inches of rain, claiming 68 lives, and causing an estimated \$125 billion in damages across the state. In estimates of regional damage, Houston received most of the statewide damage suffered during the storm.

In light of these facts, GLO's distribution of these funds that completely denies Houston and Harris County recovery funds is inexplicable. This decision will harm many of our most vulnerable residents who have been waiting years for recovery funds, placing a disproportionate

burden on minority and low-income communities who have suffered from repeated flooding events in recent years.

These actions are in direct opposition to the Congressional intent for which the funds were originally appropriated. We strongly urge you to halt all GLO actions associated with the current State Action Plan and initiate a HUD review to ensure equitable and appropriate distribution of these funds.

Furthermore, GLO's recent actions have raised serious doubts about its ability to be a responsible steward of these Congressionally appropriated funds. We ask HUD to give serious consideration to whether GLO has demonstrated adequate compliance as the sole distributor of these funds under the existing rule, and we urge the department to ensure the areas worst hit by Hurricane Harvey receive the funds they were intended. In our view, direct allocation of funds intended for Houston and Harris County should be given strong consideration at this time.

The people of Houston and Harris County experienced tragic loss during Hurricane Harvey, but we have moved forward together as a community. We urge you to reverse this action which imperils the recovery process essential to our community and intended by Congress. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Sylvia Garcia
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress