

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 4, 2019

Acting Director Russell Vought
The Office of Management and Budget
725 12th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Acting Director Vought:

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have been among the many federal agencies who have helped our state recover from the effects of Hurricane Harvey. We are grateful for your support, especially the approval of the Texas General Land Office's (GLO) State Action Plan last June for vital housing and infrastructure funds. Moreover, we are grateful for HUD and OMB's efforts to ensure that Texas was able to continue to draw down these important federal funds during the partial government shutdown. However, now that the shutdown has ended, we write to urge expeditious approval of the rules at HUD that will define mitigation projects for the Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program in Texas.

In August of 2017, Hurricane Harvey paralyzed our state, dumping nearly 60 inches of rain, claiming 68 lives and causing an estimated \$125 billion worth of damage. Hurricane Harvey was the most economically destructive hurricane in Texas history and the second-most expensive hurricane in American history. Thousands of Texans are still struggling to put their lives back together and rebuild. Our state's ability to move forward on projects that will mitigate against future disasters, and the need for future federal disaster assistance, is stalled. In February of 2018 in response to recent natural disasters, Congress appropriated \$28 billion in CDBG-DR funds explicitly to rebuild and mitigate against future storms. Of that funding, HUD allocated \$4.383 billion to Texas. Almost one year later, however, Texas cannot begin to utilize this important funding because HUD has not published the rules governing their use in the Federal Register.

As the lead state agency for administering CDBG-DR funds, the GLO has worked hand-in-hand with HUD to define the meaning of mitigation and to identify projects that would best help those impacted by Hurricane Harvey. Despite the collaboration between the GLO and HUD, the rules have not yet been published in the Federal Register. As a result, the GLO has been significantly delayed in drafting a State Action Plan for the funds, the critical next step at the state level before the grants can begin to flow. Texans cannot afford to wait any longer. We urge you to expedite publication of these rules. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Greg Abbott
Governor, State of Texas

John Cornyn
United States Senator

Ted Cruz
United States Senator

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

Pete Olson
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Randy Weber
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

Sylvia Garcia
Member of Congress

Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

Michael Cloud
Member of Congress

Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress

Kevin Brady
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Ben Carson
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development