

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 14, 2017

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Chairman
Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hensarling,

We request a hearing to explore the best practices in disaster recovery that can help families regain their financial footing following devastating floods like the Category 4 Hurricanes Harvey and Irma which caused by many estimates more than \$100 billion in damage. Federal disaster declarations have been granted in Texas, Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands and other areas.

We know from previous disasters such as Hurricanes Sandy and Katrina that it can take years for families and often entire communities who have lost their cars, their property, their homes, their jobs, and tragically, even a loved one, to recover financially. These families and communities will also struggle to keep their small businesses open and provide for themselves and others. We also know that providing even just a modest amount of aid--whether financial or technical assistance--can make a huge difference to individuals and small businesses trying to get back on their feet. By contrast, excessive paperwork and delays owing to fear of fraud chokes recovery.

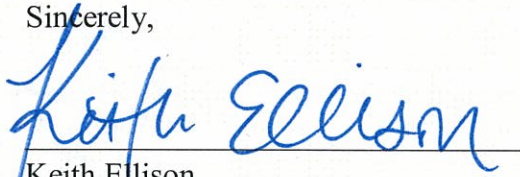
A hearing that discusses best practices in how financial, realty and insurance firms can best respond would be very timely. We must ensure that people receive quick and fair compensation from their insurance firms. We should consider ways that federal funds can be used to respond to desperately-needed housing. Specifically, we would like to hear from Beth Van Duyne, the U.S. Housing and Urban Development administrator for the Southwest region, on her division's plans to respond to this crisis. Additionally, we would like to explore how the Small Business Administration can provide much needed support better and faster.

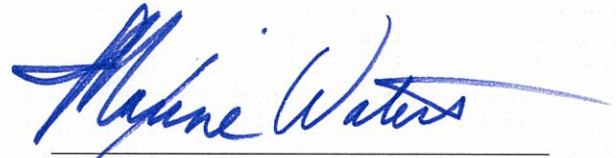
In addition, we would appreciate the opportunity to hear from witnesses on finance, housing and insurance policies that can avoid causing families to pile up devastatingly high levels of debt, destroying their credit histories and pushing them into insolvency, or leading to eviction from their rental home. We believe there should be ways to provide loan deferral and forgiveness so that families are not forced to destroy their credit and declare bankruptcy.

Extreme weather events are increasing in frequency and intensity in the U.S. Let's learn from previous disasters such as hurricane Katrina about the best ways to avoid undue financial harm to our fellow Americans already traumatized by floods and hurricanes. Access to affordable, responsible finance moreover can help aid and speed recovery by revitalizing communities and businesses.

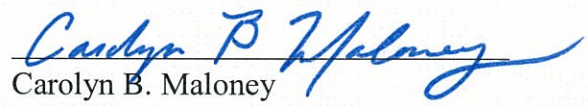
Above all, let us act on perhaps the most important lesson of past disasters—that we have to move with alacrity to provide support—and recall that our collective failure to act quickly in past disasters weakened the ability of those affected to help themselves and each other.

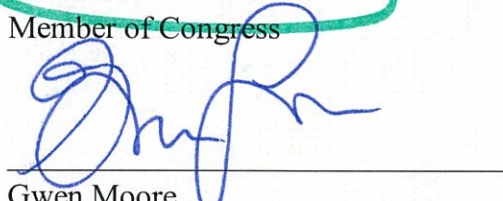
Sincerely,

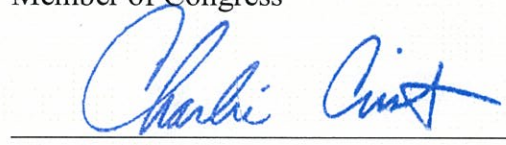

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

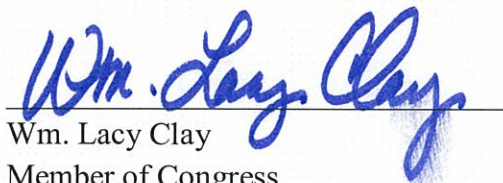

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

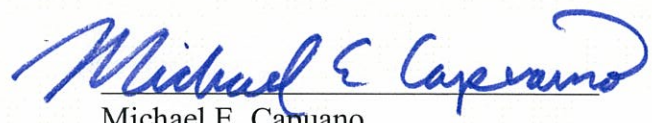

Al Green
Member of Congress

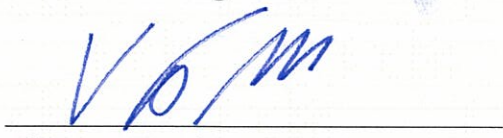

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

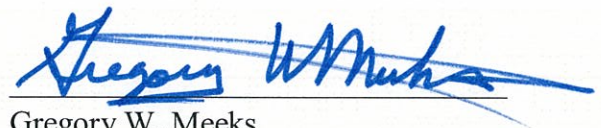

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

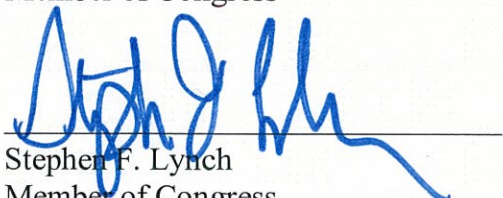

Charlie Crist
Member of Congress


Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress


Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress


Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress


Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress


Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress