

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 6, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write to highlight the urgent need for substantial affordable housing infrastructure investments as part of the broader effort to repair and modernize our nation's critical infrastructure systems. Without proportional affordable housing investments, there is no path for an equitable recovery and long term financial stability for low and middle income American families.

If we fail to act now, our nation's economic growth will continue to be held back by the over 7 million unit deficit in affordable homes. Our current low affordable housing inventory is a significant driver of higher housing costs, which in turn strains limited federal rental assistance programs. Despite the clear and urgent need, only one in four households who qualify for housing assistance receives it due to decades of chronic underfunding by Congress. Millions of eligible households are currently stuck on waiting lists – often for several years – hoping for help to come sooner.

The long wait for help sets families further back year after year. Eight million of the lowest-income renters pay at least half of their income on rent, leaving them without the resources they need to put food on the table, purchase needed medications, or make ends meet. Coronavirus and the compounding effects of explosive wildfires and extreme weather events have made the need for affordable housing more clear than ever in both rural and urban communities. Even before the coronavirus pandemic, fifty-four million rural residents lived in areas that had either a severe need or moderately severe need for the production of more affordable rental housing.

For these reasons, we urge you to include at a minimum the following key affordable housing infrastructure programs in the Build Back Better infrastructure package.

- Guarantee Housing Choice Vouchers for all eligible Americans and convert the funding status from annual appropriations to mandatory spending.
- \$70 billion to address the Public Housing repair backlog.
- \$45 billion for the National Housing Trust Fund per year, of which \$26 billion should be reserved for permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness.

While these programs and funding levels merit additional emphasis, this list should not be regarded as a complete list of all the ways we all can or should act to lower housing costs for American families. We respectfully encourage you to consider these three principal

recommendations as minimum housing investments that will help ensure the broader in the Build Back Better infrastructure package delivers broad and equitable benefits to all Americans.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

/s/ Ritchie Torres
United States Representative

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

/s/ Stephen Lynch
United States Representative

/s/ Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

/s/ Adam Smith
United States Representative

/s/ Ed Markey
United States Senator

/s/ Lucy McBath
United States Representative

/s/ Alex Padilla
United States Senator

/s/ Suzanne Bonamici
United States Representative

/s/ Patty Murray
United States Senator

/s/ Jesús G. “Chuy” García
United States Representative

/s/ Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

/s/ Rashida Tlaib
United States Representative

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Jerrold Nadler
United States Representative

/s/ Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

/s/ Earl Blumenauer
United States Representative

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/s/ Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/ Anna G. Eshoo
United States Representative

/s/ Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

/s/ Jerry McNerney
United States Representative

/s/ Ted W. Lieu
United States Representative

/s/ Dina Titus
United States Representative

/s/ Gwen Moore
United States Representative

/s/ Donald S. Beyer Jr.
United States Representative

/s/ Mondaire Jones
United States Representative

/s/ Barbara Lee
United States Representative

/s/ Carolyn B. Maloney
United States Representative

/s/ Adam B. Schiff
United States Representative

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez
United States Representative

/s/ Ro Khanna
United States Representative

/s/ Joe Neguse
United States Representative

/s/ Joaquin Castro
United States Representative

/s/ James P. McGovern
United States Representative

/s/ Alan Lowenthal
United States Representative

/s/ Raúl M. Grijalva
United States Representative

/s/ David N. Cicilline
United States Representative

/s/ Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
United States Representative

/s/ Mark Pocan
United States Representative

/s/ Eleanor Holmes Norton
United States Representative

/s/ Jamaal Bowman
United States Representative

/s/ Donald M. Payne, Jr.
United States Representative

/s/ Judy Chu
United States Representative

/s/ Nikema Williams
United States Representative

/s/ André Carson
United States Representative

/s/ Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
United States Representative

/s/ Grace Meng
United States Representative

/s/ Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
United States Representative

/s/ Cori Bush
United States Representative

/s/ Steve Cohen
United States Representative

/s/ Lucille Roybal-Allard
United States Representative

/s/ Mark DeSaulnier
United States Representative

/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
United States Representative

/s/ Adriano Espaillat
United States Representative

/s/ Bonnie Watson Coleman
United States Representative

/s/ Bobby L. Rush
United States Representative

/s/ Yvette D. Clarke
United States Representative

/s/ Mary Gay Scanlon
United States Representative

/s/ Jimmy Panetta
United States Representative

/s/ Mike Levin
United States Representative

/s/ Jan Schakowsky
United States Representative

/s/ Kathleen M. Rice
United States Representative

/s/ Daniel T. Kildee
United States Representative

/s/ Stacey E. Plaskett
United States Representative

/s/ Andy Levin
United States Representative

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/s/ Gregory W. Meeks
United States Representative

/s/ Susan Wild
United States Representative

/s/ Thomas R. Suozzi
United States Representative

/s/ Albio Sires
United States Representative

/s/ Chellie Pingree
United States Representative

/s/ Pramila Jayapal
United States Representative

/s/ Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Representative

/s/ Ruben Gallego
United States Representative

/s/ Katie Porter
United States Representative

/s/ Deborah K. Ross
United States Representative

/s/ Jackie Speier
United States Representative

/s/ Doris Matsui
United States Representative

Cc: Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi