

June 19, 2019

The Honorable Al Green
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ann Wagner
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

To Representatives Green and Wagner:

We, the undersigned members of the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition, write to thank you for your leadership in introducing the “Reforming Disaster Recovery Act of 2019” and to urge you to reintroduce the bill this term. If enacted, your legislation would permanently authorize the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program, helping to ensure that this critical resource reaches more of the lowest income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, people experiencing homelessness, and other vulnerable people and their communities.

The Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition is led by the National Low Income Housing Coalition and includes more than 800 local, state, and national organizations, including many organizations with first-hand experience recovering after disasters. Together, we work to ensure a complete and equitable disaster housing recovery for all survivors, including those with the lowest incomes who are often the hardest-hit by disasters and have the fewest resources to recover.

CDBG-DR is the nation’s primary long-term disaster rebuilding program, providing states and communities with the flexible resources needed to rebuild affordable housing and infrastructure after a disaster. By formally authorizing the program, your legislation would help ensure that the recovery process is administered consistently and that dollars can flow more quickly to communities in need.

Moreover, the bill includes important measures that ensure scarce resources are targeted to families and communities most in need. The bill requires states to allocate resources equitably between housing and infrastructure priorities and among homeowners, renters, and people experiencing homelessness. The bill solidifies in statute the requirement that 70 percent of funds must benefit low- and moderate-income communities and sets clearer direction to the Department of Housing and Urban Development on when it can adjust this requirement. By directing the Office of Inspector General to oversee program outcomes, the bill will help ensure that CDBG-DR delivers on Congress’s intent to serve all eligible survivors. The bill makes public data on the impact of the disaster and how resources are spent public, promoting transparency, allowing effective public participation in the development of state recovery plans, and helping state and local governments and philanthropic organizations better identify critical gaps in services.

We look forward to working with you and other Congressional leaders to enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

The Arc of the United States
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force

Disaster Law Project
Enterprise Community Partners
Fair Share Housing Center
Habitat for Humanity International
Hispanic Federation
Local Initiatives Support Coalition
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Coalition for Healthy Housing
National Community Development Association
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Texas Low Income Housing Information Service