

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 6, 2018

Rep. Kevin McCarthy  
Majority Leader  
U.S Capitol, H-107  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Rep. Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Capitol, H-204  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. McCarthy and Ms. Pelosi,

We have become aware that a bill that was recently marked up in the House Financial Services Committee, H.R. 4557, the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act, is in contradiction with both existing disaster response policy as well as the Disaster Response Reform Act; legislation that has passed this chamber twice during the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. As drafted, H.R. 4557 would have significant consequences for United States disaster policy, the unchecked rise in disaster costs, and the congressional role in disaster recovery. We believe this departure from precedent requires engagement with the Small Business and Transportation and Infrastructure committees before the legislation should be permitted to advance to consideration on the floor.

For decades, Congress has used the Community Block Development Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program, administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to periodically fund aspects of recovery in the wake of catastrophic disasters. While our districts have benefited from this support, we believe that a comprehensive discussion must be held to determine if CDBG-DR and HUD are the best stewards of taxpayer dollars and congressional appropriations for the purpose of coordinated, catastrophic disaster recovery.

While CDBG-DR is lauded as a flexible program that is malleable to the unique needs of each disaster, in practice, the program is fraught with bureaucratic and compliance delays, exorbitant overhead and administrative costs, and income requirements that do not further effective and efficient recovery. It has now been six months since Congress passed supplemental appropriations for disaster recovery as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, but HUD has yet to even release guidance on how this funding can be spent, much less deploy any aid to impacted communities. Though we appreciate H.R. 4557's intent to protect taxpayer dollars from waste, fraud, and abuse, we believe a larger conversation is needed to ensure that congressional appropriations for disasters are directed in concert with existing recovery efforts for the most impactful result.

We also would like to bring to your attention that H.R. 4557 supports policies that are in direct contradiction with legislation passed by this chamber during the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. Following recent disasters, our constituents were instructed by FEMA and HUD to pursue SBA loans, only to find out later that they had rendered themselves ineligible for potential grants. In December of 2017 and again in April of this year, the House passed a bipartisan disaster package which included legislative reforms to address this “duplication of benefits” issue. We are concerned that a provision contained in H.R. 4557 contradicts and complicates a bipartisan solution that has passed this body twice within the past eight months.

H.R. 4557 also reinstates the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS). These standards were revoked last year because of compliance costs, as well of a lack of local and stakeholder input or cost-benefit analysis. In reestablishing FFRMS, H.R. 4557 makes a significant policy departure from House-led efforts on this issue in both the 114<sup>th</sup> and 115<sup>th</sup> Congresses.

We appreciate and support H.R. 4557’s intention to modernize the federal role in disaster recovery and improve current government inefficiencies. However, we believe that a comprehensive conversation that includes all relevant data, stakeholders, and policymakers must be had to effectively devise a coordinated and responsible strategy. We are committed to working through these concerns and ask that action on this legislation be delayed until these issues can be addressed by all parties and committees of jurisdiction.

Sincerely,



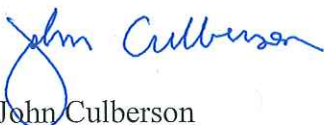
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Member of Congress



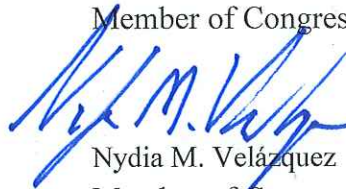
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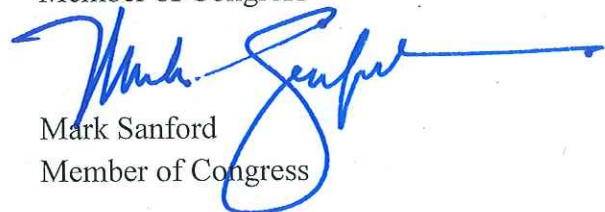
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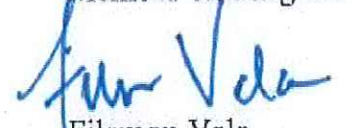
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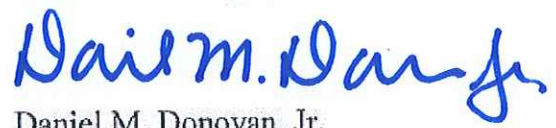
Charlie Crist  
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Filemon Vela  
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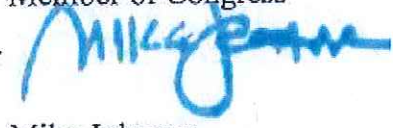
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