

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 20, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

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.

The President's call to invest more than \$300 billion in housing in the American Jobs Plan is a critical first step, but we must ensure that these resources are targeted to help the millions who pay more than half of their income on rent today. The American Jobs Plan laudably includes funds for affordable housing development, and capital investments are indeed needed to repair public housing and build and preserve affordable and supportive housing through the national Housing Trust Fund. Without rental assistance, however, people below the poverty line generally will not be able to afford to live in homes built with investments in the American Jobs Plan. Development subsidies typically do not cover the ongoing costs of operating and managing housing, and the lowest-income households cannot afford rents sufficient to cover those costs. We must ensure that any homes built with these federal investments are affordable to people with the greatest needs.

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.

- Build on recent investments in short-term, emergency rental assistance by providing multi-year mandatory funding for a major housing voucher expansion to pave the way toward universal rental assistance.
- At least \$70 billion to address the Public Housing repair backlog.
- \$45 billion for the National Housing Trust Fund, 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. For example, Congress should make additional investments to preserve and create affordable housing in rural and tribal communities, address lead-based paint and other home health hazards, increase access to affordable homeownership for people and communities who have been too often locked out, and ensure that all communities provide access to opportunity for those who live and work there. However, 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/ Ritchie Torres
United States Representative

/s/ Emanuel Cleaver, II
United States Representative

/s/ Kai Kahele
United States Representative

/s/ Bill Pascrell, Jr.
United States Representative

/s/ Linda T. Sánchez
United States Representative

/s/ Carolyn B. Maloney
United States Representative

/s/ Hakeem Jeffries
United States Representative

/s/ Lori Trahan
United States Representative

/s/ Ed Perlmutter
United States Representative

/s/ Suzanne Bonamici
United States Representative

/s/ Sara Jacobs
United States Representative

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

/s/ Robin L. Kelly
United States Representative

/s/ Rashida Tlaib
United States Representative

/s/ Ann McLane Kuster
United States Representative

/s/ Jerrold Nadler
United States Representative

/s/ Zoe Lofgren
United States Representative

/s/ Earl Blumenauer
United States Representative

/s/ Frederica S. Wilson
United States Representative

/s/ Anna G. Eshoo
United States Representative

/s/ Ilhan Omar
United States Representative

/s/ Jerry McNerney
United States Representative

/s/ Darren Soto
United States Representative

/s/ Stephen F. Lynch
United States Representative

/s/ Mondaire Jones
United States Representative

/s/ Colin Allred
United States Representative

/s/ Brenda L. Lawrence
United States Representative

/s/ Jake Auchincloss
United States Representative

/s/ Marie Newman
United States Representative

/s/ Nanette Diaz Barragán
United States Representative

/s/ A. Donald McEachin
United States Representative

/s/ Karen Bass
United States Representative

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez
United States Representative

/s/ Tony Cárdenas
United States Representative

/s/ Mike Quigley
United States Representative

/s/ Gerald E. Connolly
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/ C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
United States Representative

/s/ Barbara Lee
United States Representative

/s/ Adam Smith
United States Representative

/s/ Melanie Stansbury
United States Representative

/s/ Marilyn Strickland
United States Representative

/s/ Ro Khanna
United States Representative

/s/ Joe Neguse
United States Representative

/s/ Peter Welch
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, Ed.D.
United States Representative

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

/s/ Adriano Espaillat
United States Representative

/s/ Judy Chu
United States Representative

/s/ Nikema Williams
United States Representative

/s/ André Carson
United States Representative

/s/ Sheila Jackson Lee
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/ David Trone
United States Representative

/s/ Ayanna Pressley
United States Representative

/s/ Mark DeSaulnier
United States Representative

/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
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/ Al Lawson
United States Representative

/s/ Mark Takano
United States Representative

/s/ Stacey E. Plaskett
United States Representative

/s/ Andy Levin
United States Representative

/s/ Gregory W. Meeks
United States Representative

/s/ Marc Veasey
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

/s/ Danny K. Davis
United States Representative

/s/ Madeleine Dean
United States Representative

/s/ Diana DeGette
United States Representative

/s/ Antonio Delgado
United States Representative

/s/ Val Demings
United States Representative

/s/ Debbie Dingell
United States Representative

/s/ Dwight Evans
United States Representative

/s/ Vicente Gonzalez
United States Representative

/s/ Al Green
United States Representative

/s/ Jahana Hayes
United States Representative

/s/ Steven Horsford
United States Representative

/s/ Jared Huffman
United States Representative