

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 20, 2013

Mr. John B. Rhea
Chairman
New York City Housing Authority
250 Broadway
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chairman Rhea:

On October 29, 2013, Superstorm Sandy roared through New York City. The storm lasted several hours, devastating many buildings in the city's waterfront areas. It knocked out the power for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Wind-fueled fires destroyed 111 homes in Breezy Point, Queens. Sewage plants were so overwhelmed that wastewater flowed into local waterways, streets, and buildings. Forty-eight people died in the aftermath. Ultimately, Sandy caused over \$10 billion in damages to homes, businesses, and infrastructure in New York City alone.

New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) public housing buildings were hit particularly hard. Over 400 of the authority's projects—home to approximately 79,000 residents—lost their electricity. Critical utility systems at 200 properties were damaged by flooding. The boilers at 26 buildings were destroyed, leaving 34,565 apartments without heat during a brutal cold spell. It took weeks to restore these utilities. The flooding also exacerbated mold growth and ruined the structural integrity of several properties. Over 5,000 units had to be cleaned. NYCHA reports that 170 families have applied for relocation assistance.

NYCHA estimates that fully restoring its properties will cost almost \$800 million. Completing the necessary rehabilitation will take years and require hundreds of qualified professionals. In addition, NYCHA's public housing tenants still need supportive services as they rebuild their lives following the storm.

As Members of New York's Congressional Delegation, we hope that NYCHA will take advantage of all the tools at its disposal during the recovery. Accordingly, we strongly urge NYCHA to aggressively train and hire public housing residents under its Section 3 obligations with a portion of the disaster assistance it receives.

Several households lost vital sources of income as a result of the storm. Many tenants could not work because their places of business were damaged or public transportation services had been disrupted. Some even lost their jobs. Utilizing Section 3 in conjunction with NYCHA's relief efforts would increase the job opportunities available for these struggling families.

Furthermore, the properties in New York City's coastal areas suffered extensive damage from the flooding. Several need serious rehabilitation. Some units are experiencing persistent mold

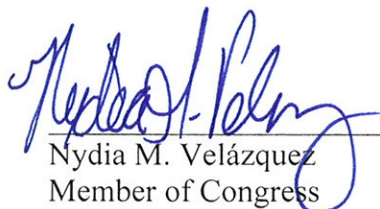
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and mildew infestations that require more comprehensive treatments. There are not enough qualified, local contractors available to complete this work in the near future. Using disaster relief funding for Section 3 ventures would provide residents with the necessary skills to quickly participate in the repair and restoration of their homes.

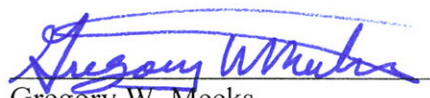
Consequently, we would recommend that NYCHA adopt a clear plan to maximize the use of Superstorm Sandy disaster relief funding for Section 3 programming. The plan should detail the agency's intended resident outreach efforts, the types of training that the authority will provide, the kinds of jobs available, and the agency's timeline for hiring residents. Employing such a plan would not only expedite the recovery of public housing buildings and tenants, but provide NYCHA with additional resources for future disasters.

Thank you in advance for the consideration of this matter.

Cordially,



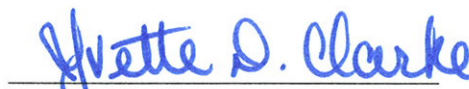
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



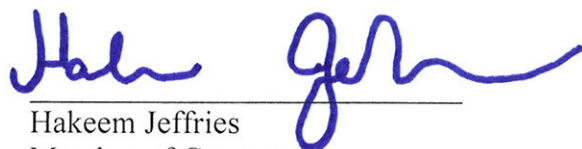
Gregory W. Meeks
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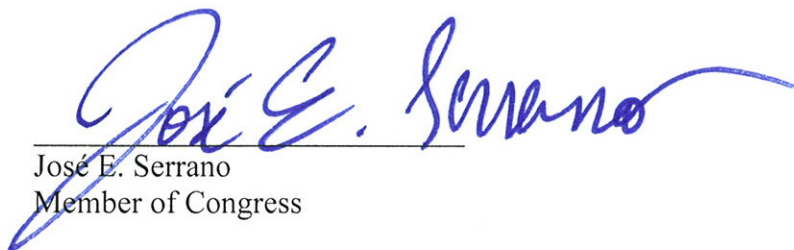
Charles Rangel
Member of Congress



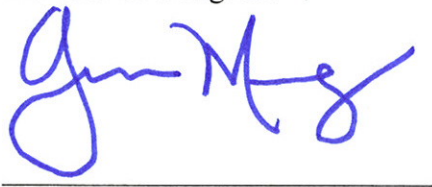
Yvette D. Clarke
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Hakeem Jeffries
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José E. Serrano
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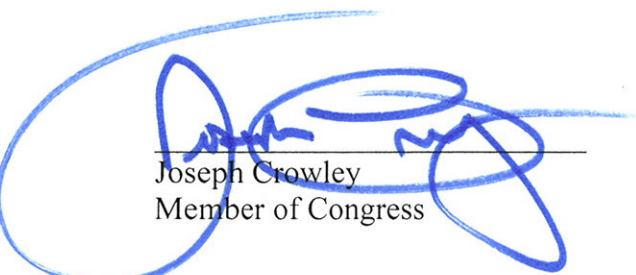


Grace Meng
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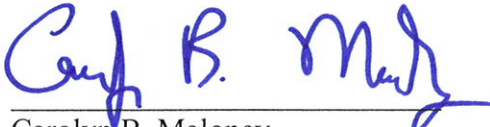


Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

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cc: NYCHA Equal Opportunity Director Celeste Thomas-Segure
NYCHA General Manager Cecil House
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Assistant Secretary for Public and
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