



May 21, 2021

The Honorable Marcia L. Fudge
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th St. S.W.
Washington, DC 201410

RE: Houston CDBG-MITIGATION

Dear Secretary Fudge:

The Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funding offers the opportunity for communities at risk to go beyond recovery and increase resilience by mitigating the devastating impacts of disasters. Houston has experienced seven federally declared disasters in six years. One of the worst, Hurricane Harvey, impacted more than 300,000 households and disrupted millions of lives.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 made \$28 billion available in disaster recovery funds and directed HUD to allocate no less than \$12 billion to mitigation activities nationwide (proportional to the amounts that CDBG-DR grantees received for qualifying disasters in 2015, 2016 and 2017). Out of \$12 billion available for mitigation activities, **\$4.3 billion** were allocated to the State of Texas that are currently being administered by the Texas General Land Office (GLO). Based on the needs of the City of Houston and Harris County, we were earmarked approximately 44.2% of the state allocation for the CDBG-DR 17 funding, initially granting the City \$1.3 billion as a direct sub-recipient under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Disaster Recovery program. However, to date, the City of Houston received **\$0** from the first **\$1.0 billion** of the State's CDBG-Mitigation program.

The State Action Plan, approved by HUD, has 13 programs geared towards infrastructure and housing project implementation. In comments submitted on January 6, 2020, the City emphasized the issue of proportionality. The Executive Summary and Needs Assessment within the current plan identify flooding as a major hazard in Texas and one of the most common. Harris County, which includes the City of Houston, is identified as the only County that experienced consecutively 2015, 2016, and 2017 flood disasters. The Plan has failed to make sufficient funding available to the City of Houston and places limitations on the City's eligibility for programs and projects to less than **15%** of the total funding.

On Thursday, May 20, 2021, in a meeting with GLO representatives, the City received the unfortunate news that **0%** of the first tranche of the funds were to be granted to the City of Houston. The actions taken by the GLO have disadvantaged larger municipalities and prevented equitable investments in

communities with the greatest need. While smaller municipalities in Harris County received a combined \$90 million for mitigation, it is completely unacceptable that Houston and other parts of Harris County received nothing, when nearly 50% of the Harvey damages statewide occurred in our region.

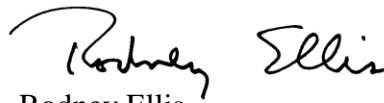
These actions do not reflect the intent of the bipartisan disaster relief appropriation for the proportional use of CDBG-MIT funding. The limited available funding for the most impacted areas with the highest risk hinders the City's ability to continue to reduce the potential damages from future storms and protect the housing investments that are underway through the CDBG-DR 17 programs.

We respectfully request HUD halt all GLO actions associated with the current State Action Plan pending HUD's review for appropriate and equitable distribution of funds to protect our city and region and build resilience as we adapt to an uncertain future.

Sincerely,



Sylvester Turner
Mayor



Rodney Ellis
Harris County Commissioner, Precinct One