



**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

October 31, 2017

The Honorable Brock Long  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Long:

We write to express our concern about the lack of available housing options in Florida following Hurricane Irma. It is critical that displaced Floridians in affected counties are provided with the ability to access rental housing.

Tens of thousands of homes in Florida were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Irma. Reports have indicated thousands of Floridians are waiting for housing units to arrive and be filled, and many are living in uninhabitable circumstances with collapsed ceilings and mold. These are not sustainable living conditions, and could lead to negative health consequences or personal injury. While we recognize manufactured housing may not be appropriate for every situation, it seems there are serious delays in direct leasing options as well. Thus, we urge you to work expeditiously with Florida communities to ensure that Floridians have safe and sustainable housing options in the coming months.

It is also our understanding that Florida residents have had issues with the FEMA help line in obtaining assistance. Some reports state individuals calling FEMA's help line have waited up to four hours before speaking with a representative. Additionally, FEMA's current estimates are approximately 45 days for a home inspection, a required step for Individual Assistance claims to be paid out. This means families face a long wait before receiving funding for housing needs, such as housing repair, replacement or construction. The wait times for FEMA phone assistance and home inspections appear to be longer than those experienced by individuals during past major disasters. A March 2006 report conducted by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General found Hurricane Katrina applicants experienced an average wait time of ten minutes before speaking with an agent. The report also stated FEMA has historically completed home inspections within 10 days.

We recognize and appreciate the 4,000 inspectors in the field working tirelessly to help people in need of housing assistance. However, the current wait times must be improved. Therefore, we ask that you work with Florida communities to ensure that displaced storm victims have adequate housing options available to them while they rebuild and repair their homes, and address any outstanding issues with FEMA's help line that have led to delays with assistance.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



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Bill Nelson  
United States Senator



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Marco Rubio  
United States Senator