

January 24, 2022

The Honorable Marcia Fudge
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Fudge:

I write to direct your attention to certain Florida properties that participate in the Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance program with a troubling history that once again received failing Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) scores.

Last year, in response to direct outreach from constituents, my staff visited numerous Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance properties throughout the State of Florida. In many of these cases, my staff found systemic evidence of harmful conditions and a general state of chronic despair. I wrote to you on May 18, 2021, expressing my concern over a lack of timely and regular inspections. At the time, at least 29 properties in Florida with failing REAC scores under the Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance program had not been inspected in several years—apparently violating the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Uniform Physical Condition Standards. My staff visited most of these 29 properties and confirmed that the conditions were unsafe and unsanitary.

On July 7, 2021, you confirmed that each of the properties I highlighted had received new inspections, with the exception of one that has since been completed. While I am appreciative that the mandatory REAC inspections occurred, upon review of the most recent REAC scores, I found that at least seven of the 29 properties that previously had failing REAC scores continue to have failing scores. Even more alarming, more than half of the properties on this list have worse conditions now than when they were previously inspected. Moreover, of the 29 inspections that you shared were completed, seven scores have yet to be posted on HUD’s website.¹

These failing scores and ongoing delays highlight an urgent need to address the unsafe and unsanitary conditions that many Florida families have been facing on a daily basis. Accordingly, I request that you provide my office with the following by February 7, 2022:

¹ https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/housing/mfh/remf/remfinspecscores/remfphysinspscores

1. A detailed plan of action, including remediation requirements and civil penalties, on how HUD plans to proceed with ensuring safety and sanitary conditions at the seven failing properties;
2. What steps HUD has taken to improve conditions at each of the failing properties since finalizing the failing REAC scores;
3. What enforcement actions HUD has taken against the properties' owners to date;
4. What enforcement actions HUD will consider with regard to the properties' owners;
5. The REAC scores for the remainder of the properties, or a date for when such scores may be provided; and
6. How HUD plans to coordinate with local code enforcement agencies to remediate property deficiencies.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to continuing to work with you to protect the people and families of Florida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator