

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
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SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

December 11, 2018

Mr. William Long
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Long:

Thank you for providing personnel and resources to the Hurricane Michael Recovery Assistance Center my office organized in Panama City last week. The ability for survivors to receive on-site assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was extremely helpful. However, I write to express concern regarding FEMA's implementation of desperately needed housing resources in areas affected by Hurricane Michael. While FEMA approved the State of Florida's request for Direct Housing Assistance on October 29, 2018, reports have indicated that these resources have not been implemented with necessary urgency as countless families are still waiting for housing resources that were approved six weeks ago.

While I recognize the difficult task FEMA faces with the level of destruction caused by Hurricane Michael, a delay of this length constitutes a failure to address the housing needs of affected survivors. According to reports, Bay County District Schools is currently facing the highest number of homeless students the district has ever seen. This type of devastation requires the federal government to act in a thorough and efficient manner to ensure that available resources are both approved and delivered. To date, families in Northwest Florida have not seen an appropriate response to their housing needs and FEMA must immediately act to address this concern.

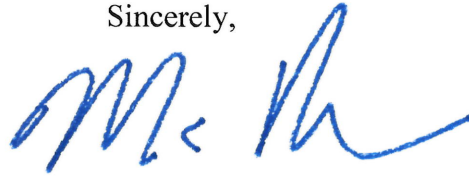
More specifically, it is my understanding that counties, such as Bay, are having issues receiving updated information from FEMA as to the cause for delay in direct housing resources being executed. It has been conveyed that Bay County has approximately 1,400 Floridians approved for direct housing, but to date, has only received 29 trailers in total. Additionally, it is my understanding that FEMA has not adequately considered group sites for trailers, as around 70 percent of impacted survivors are renters. This lack of communication is unacceptable and must be immediately rectified. Affected Florida counties are working tirelessly to explore housing solutions for survivors and the federal government must provide an equivalent response in the fulfillment of these resources.

The level of devastation caused to families in Northwest Florida is unprecedented. I urge FEMA to address the housing needs of survivors by accelerating the implementation of approved

resources and communicate with these communities on these efforts, so that we can effectively assist those most in need.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

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

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator