

April 29, 2021

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 the unsafe and unsanitary living conditions that my constituents are currently facing at the Eastside Terrace Apartments and Eastside Gardens Apartments in Jacksonville, Florida. After receiving outreach directly from affected residents, my staff visited Eastside Terrace Apartments on April 21, 2021, and Eastside Gardens Apartments on April 22, 2021. During these visits, my staff met with tenants of both properties, where they found systemic evidence of black mold, pest infestations, crumbling staircases, and a general state of chronic disrepair.

On November 19, 2019, Eastside Terrace Apartments received a failing Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) inspection score of 51/100, for which a follow up inspection was requested. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a follow-up inspection has yet to take place, indicating there is not a certification by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that deficiencies outlined in the failing inspection have been remedied. On April 27, 2021, a Management and Occupancy Review was conducted, but the results have not yet been provided to my staff.

It is unacceptable that residents of Eastside Terrace Apartments have been obligated to live in unsafe conditions at a property with a failing REAC score for 18 months without remedy. Furthermore, Eastside Gardens Apartments has not undergone a REAC inspection since November 13, 2018.

I request immediate action to ensure that constituents at both properties are guaranteed safe and sanitary living conditions, including a swift follow-up inspection resulting in an updated REAC score for both properties. This should also include the enforcement of improvements at those properties through any applicable penalties. I also request an expedited review of the April 27, 2021 Management and Occupancy Review.

This situation also raises concerns that similar conditions may be present at other properties in the State of Florida as inspections have been delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. I encourage you to resume affordable housing inspections of HUD assisted properties to ensure that these important matters are addressed.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to working with HUD to protect the people and families at Eastside Terrace Apartments and Eastside Gardens Apartments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', written in a cursive style.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator