

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 8, 2014

The Honorable Shaun Donovan
Secretary
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Donovan:

We write to express our strong objections to reports that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is considering reallocation of Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) funds appropriated in the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 away from victims of Superstorm Sandy to fund a national resiliency competition. HUD is not statutorily required to take such action and doing so would be an imprudent step that denies vital aid to thousands of Sandy victims for which this recovery assistance was intended.

As you know, the primary purpose of CDBG-DR funds is to satisfy unmet needs that arise during recovery from a natural disaster. When we joined together to pass the Sandy relief package in Congress, it was both our intention and expectation to see these funds used first and foremost to meet the unmet needs of Sandy victims. Any action to the contrary is not warranted and would leave aid programs unfunded and our ongoing recovery efforts incomplete.

Reports that HUD is considering this diversion of funds come at a time when the recovery efforts in New Jersey and New York are far from complete. According to New Jersey's recently updated Action Plan, there remains over \$1.6 billion in unmet housing needs, over \$17 billion in unmet infrastructure needs, and over \$241 million in unmet economic development needs. In addition, according to New York State and New York City, tens of billions of dollars in unmet housing and infrastructure need still exist. As HUD has a finite amount of Community Development funds to satisfy these unmet needs, every dollar is critical for maximizing the effectiveness of our ongoing recovery efforts.

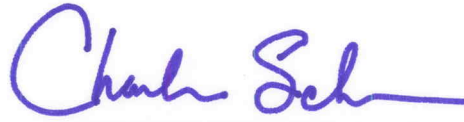
While we support further funding for disaster assistance and mitigation projects to build our nation's resiliency, funding such projects must not come at the expense of Sandy victims for whom this money was primarily intended. Today, thousands of families remain without homes, and small business owners without work, wondering when help is on the way. Forcing these families and struggling small business owners into a competition for the disaster assistance they desperately need would further add to their uncertainty and hardship.

We therefore strongly urge you not to redirect CDBG-DR funds away from victims of Superstorm Sandy to other parts of the country. We look forward to you recognizing the importance of this issue to us and the victims of Superstorm Sandy.

Sincerely,



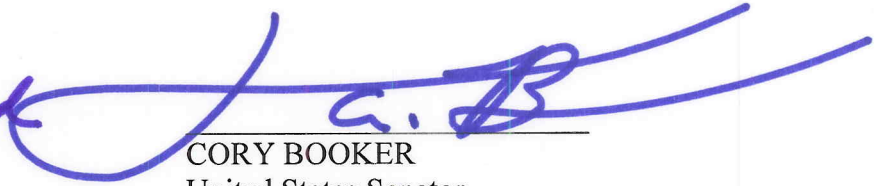
ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



CHARLES SCHUMER
United States Senator



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
United States Senator



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