

JOHN B. LARSON

FIRST DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

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June 22, 2018

The Honorable Kristjen Nielsen
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

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

Dear Secretary Nielsen and Secretary Carson;

I am writing to express grave concern regarding the approaching termination of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Transitional Sheltering Assistance Program that will expire on June 30, 2018 and end assistance for nearly 2,300 displaced families, who are still in desperate need of a temporary shelter. Over eighty families who relocated to the State of Connecticut could become homeless when the program expires. This continues to be a humanitarian tragedy and the community needs to know what the federal government's plan will be going forward and whether FEMA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will step up to provide alternative housing assistance before the program expires.

Since Hurricanes Irma and Maria struck Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, the State of Connecticut has worked in close coordination with its federal, local, and non-profit partners to effectively accommodate 13,000 displaced residents of Puerto Rico, who sought shelter within six months after the storms. Many of them are working with local disaster case managers to find permanent housing and employment here in Connecticut. Returning to Puerto Rico, in the middle of a hurricane season, is not a sustainable option for them.

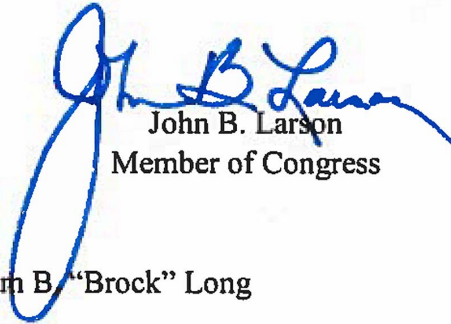
I urgently request that you to take action to ensure these families do not become homeless on July 1st, including by providing an additional extension of TSA assistance. We are concerned that the federal government has yet to outline a contingency plan for these families and that there may be tragic consequences if nothing is done.

As you may recall, in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy that displaced many families, FEMA and HUD issued an Interagency Agreement (IAA) to implement the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP). The DHAP provided monthly rent subsidies, security deposit assistance, and utility deposit assistance to aid eligible evacuees who faced extended displacement. Fellow

Americans living on the island and thousands of evacuees who relocated to the mainland deserve a helping hand, and the DHAP could provide an immediate solution for a much-needed relief. I ask that you also consider offering access to the DHAP for these families.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John B. Larson". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable William B. "Brock" Long
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency