

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 5, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Capitol, Room S-128
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
United States Capitol, Room H-305
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Frelinghuysen, and Ranking Member Lowey:

On Friday, August 25, 2017, Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the southeast coast of Texas and decimated a number of coastal communities. For nearly a week, this storm battered our state with extreme winds, torrential rains, and record-setting floods, causing catastrophic damage to Texas' residents and businesses.

In response to this catastrophic event (*DR-4332*) and following a direct request for supplemental funding from the Administration, Congress acted swiftly, passing legislation to appropriate \$15.25 billion in emergency aid. This amount included \$7.4 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), \$450 million for the Disaster Loan Program within the Small Business Administration (SBA), and \$7.4 billion for the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program. Texas greatly appreciates the appropriations committees' efforts to swiftly provide funds. However, in light of the unprecedented damage from Hurricane Harvey and the historically epochal flooding of Houston, Beaumont and surrounding regions, we all recognize that the funding already appropriated is a small fraction of the federal resources needed to help rebuild Texas and reinvigorate the American economy.

It is our understanding that the Administration, through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), has made an additional supplemental appropriation request to Congress. When considering this request, we ask that the Senate and House committees on appropriations strongly consider a number of additional funding categories, in addition to the FEMA DRF, to help expedite recovery efforts in Texas:

- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is charged with building and maintaining the nation's hurricane and storm damage reduction infrastructure, and is critical to recovery efforts after major disasters. As such, we believe it is necessary to adequately fund the USACE efforts to keep the nation's rivers and ports dredged, and to protect our coasts and cities from flooding. Given the devastation from Hurricane Harvey and the historically unprecedented amount of rainfall that recently fell on the State of Texas, we strongly recommend additional USACE funds be included in the next supplemental appropriations bill. The purpose of these funds would be to rehabilitate and repair damages to completed USACE projects and those under construction, to implement authorized projects ready for construction, to dredge Federal navigation channels, and for emergency response and recovery operations, repairs, and other activities. The swifter these projects are funded, the sooner we will reduce future loss of life and economic exposure from subsequent storms. Further, protecting critical infrastructure and returning to normal operations is a matter of economic and national security, with Harvey already causing a \$20 billion economic impact from damage to Texas ports.
REQUEST: \$10 billion
- **Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR):** H.R. 601 appropriated \$7.4 billion for this program, to remain available until expended, for all major disasters declared in 2017. Early estimates from the State of Texas indicate a total need of over \$40 billion in CDBG-DR funds. Given the projected unmet needs of our State, and the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, we strongly urge an additional down payment of CDBG-DR funds in the next emergency supplemental.
REQUEST: \$7 billion
- **State Educational Agencies:** Texas educational institutions at all levels have reported widespread damages to schools and infrastructure as a result of Hurricane Harvey. In the past, emergency supplemental packages have included funding for Local Educational Agencies (LEA), schools and institutions of higher education that were affected by natural disasters. In order to ensure that the education system endures minimal interruption, we request that the appropriations committees consider an allocation that will provide emergency assistance to educational institutions with unexpected expenses as a result of Hurricane Harvey.
REQUEST: \$800 million
- **SBA Disaster Loans Program:** In the wake of a major disaster, the SBA provides low-interest disaster loans to businesses, private non-profit organizations, homeowners and renters. SBA loans are often the first form of federal assistance available for individuals and business for disaster recovery. Any additional emergency supplemental should appropriate additional resources for the Disaster Loans Program account.
REQUEST: \$450 million

- **Economic Development Administration:** The Economic Development Administration (EDA), through the Department of Commerce, plays a crucial role in facilitating the delivery of economic assistance to local governments for long-term recovery planning, reconstruction and resiliency in response to presidentially declared disasters or emergencies. EDA grants, awarded through a competitive application process, emphasize disaster resiliency to help mitigate the potential for economic hardship as a result of future weather events.

REQUEST: \$300 million

- **Transportation Infrastructure:** In order to address long-term recovery needs, it is vital that our State's highways and transit systems are quickly restored and serviceable to ensure the movement of emergency supplies throughout the State. Authorized under 23 U.S.C. 125 and 49 U.S.C. 5324, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Emergency Relief Program and the Public Transportation Emergency Relief Program, respectively, are crucial programs that can provide Texas with immediate resources for transportation infrastructure repairs.

REQUEST: \$150 million

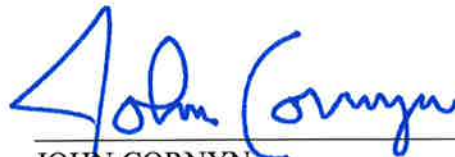
Thank you for your consideration of these funding needs and for your efforts to ensure that our State has adequate resources to recover and rebuild.

Respectfully,



GREG ABBOTT

Governor, State of Texas



JOHN CORNYN

United States Senator



TED CRUZ

United States Senator



JODEY ARRINGTON

Member of Congress



BRIAN BABIN, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON
Member of Congress



MICHAEL C. BURGESS, M.D.
Member of Congress



JOHN CARTER
Member of Congress



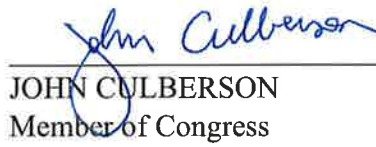
JOAQUIN CASTRO
Member of Congress




K. MICHAEL CONAWAY
Member of Congress



HENRY CUELLAR
Member of Congress



JOHN CULBERSON
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LLOYD DOGGETT
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BLAKE FARENTHOLD
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LOUIE GOHMERT
Member of Congress



VICENTE GONZALEZ
Member of Congress



KAY GRANGER
Member of Congress



AL GREEN
Member of Congress



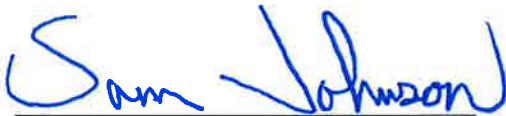
GENE GREEN
Member of Congress



WILL HURD
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SHEILA JACKSON LEE
Member of Congress



SAM JOHNSON
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KENNY MARCHANT
Member of Congress



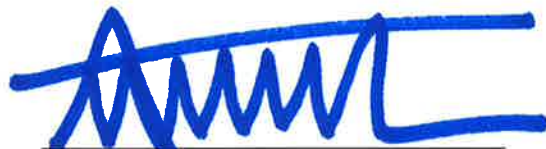
MICHAEL MCCAUL
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BETO O'ROURKE
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TED POE
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JOHN RATCLIFFE
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