January 13, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Carson:

Some of us wrote to you last Tuesday, January 7th, demanding the immediate and urgent publication of a Federal Register Notice (FRN) detailing the administrative requirements for the disbursement of the $8.3 billion in Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) appropriated in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (PL 115-123). ¹ For days now, thousands of Puerto Rican families are sleeping and living in outside tents because they are too afraid to sleep inside their houses or unsecured refuges due to last week’s 6.4 magnitude earthquake and the aftershocks that followed. ²

It has been more than two years since Hurricane Maria and Irma made landfall on the island. However, Puerto Rico has not been able to move forward with reconstruction of the island and provide adequate and secure housing for its residents because the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has illegally withheld the funds that Congress appropriated for these purposes.

Due to the new emergency at hand and the urgency of the situation, we are officially requesting an in-person meeting. It is your responsibility as Secretary of HUD to provide members of Congress an explanation as to why your Department has chosen to violate the law by withholding these critical resources. Puerto Ricans have waited too long. Members of Congress have given HUD more than enough time and HUD has disregarded the explicit deadlines established by law to publish the FRN. It is time we are provided with real answers and a definite date for the disbursement of the CDBG-DR funds for the island.

Congresswoman Velázquez will make the accommodations necessary to set up this meeting with the members. Please provide us with your availability to meet as soon as possible.

¹ See Section 21101.  
Sincerely,

Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress

Charles E. Schumer
U.S. Senator

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Kirsten Gillibrand
U.S. Senator

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Cory A. Booker
U.S. Senator

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy III
Member of Congress

José E. Serrano
Member of Congress
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

Jesus G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress
Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop  
Member of Congress

André Carson  
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

cc:  Director Mick Mulvaney  
Office of Management and Budget 7  
57 17th St NW  
Washington, DC 20053
Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress