



September 17, 2024

The Honorable Sam Graves, Chairman
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20015

The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20015

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of the nation's state and local emergency managers, H.R. 1605, the Natural Disaster Recovery Program Act of 2023, would potentially cause serious issues for the management of post-disaster federal programs. The proposed Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute (ANS) for your upcoming mark-up ties this bill to one of our highest priorities for the 118th Congress, H.R. 7671, the Disaster Management Cost Modernization Act. Given underlying issues with H.R. 1605 and our believe H.R. 7671 should be considered on its own merits, we urge your opposition to the ANS.

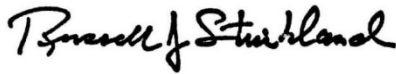
As emergency managers, we maintain responsibility for coordinating myriad programs providing federal assistance. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Agriculture, Small Business Administration, Federal Highway Administration, and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are all examples of federal agencies that provide critical aid our communities. H.R. 1605 seeks to specifically address ongoing issues surrounding the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) within HUD. Unfortunately, the bill in question is more likely to further complicate an already complex post-disaster recovery environment.

Make no mistake, the ad hoc and intermittent way in which CDBG-DR must operate is untenable. The program remaining unauthorized and subject to the availability of delayed appropriations causes significant programmatic obstacles. H.R. 1605 seeks to address these shortcomings by creating a new program with funds housed at the Department of Treasury and managed by FEMA. Unfortunately, without involving HUD, the Financial Services Committee, and housing groups in program development, this legislative solution could do nothing more than create a siloed,

duplicative program. Without first developing strong partnerships and collaboration, there is no guarantee future Congresses would not pick and choose between the existing CDBG-DR program and the proposed Natural Disaster Recovery Program.

We seek to find a solution to the ongoing CDBG-DR conundrum and wish to work with all committees of jurisdiction to find a way to permanently authorize the program. Such a solution may even ultimately include concepts from this bill. At this time, however, we do not believe H.R. 1605 is the appropriate solution and we ask you to suspend consideration until such time as all interested parties can find a path forward.

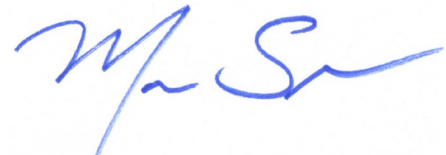
Sincerely,



Russell J. Strickland
President, NEMA



Carrie Speranza
President, IAEM-USA



Mark Sloan
President, BCEM