

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Financial Services
Washington, D.C. 20515

August 25, 2016

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Chairman
Financial Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hensarling:

We write to request that the Financial Services Committee hold a field hearing in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in order to assess the federal government's response to the recent flooding in that area, and to better inform our efforts to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) before its sunset date on September 30, 2017. The devastation in Baton Rouge is difficult to believe – the area was pummeled by more than seven trillion gallons of water – with residents experiencing a flood event that experts estimated had a 0.1 percent chance of occurring. Approximately 60,000 homes were damaged, 13 individuals lost their lives, and thousands are living in shelters. The Red Cross estimates that this is likely the worst natural disaster in the U.S. since Superstorm Sandy in 2012. With a disaster of this magnitude, it is important that we do our part as a Congressional committee with jurisdiction over relevant federal programs to ensure that the federal government's response is swift and effective. Just as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provided critical funding for those who suffered in Texas after severe flooding, we must respond to this disaster in a meaningful way.

Further, as we prepare to consider the reauthorization of the NFIP, we should be taking every opportunity to learn from this disaster in order to inform our efforts to implement positive reforms. As you may know, the extent of the devastation in the areas affected came as a surprise to most of the residents whose homes were damaged because they were outside the special flood hazard area (SFHA) and were not required to purchase flood insurance. In the aftermath of the recent disaster, these homeowners are now left with little to no means to rebuild their homes and their lives, and policymakers are left questioning the adequacy of the maps used by the NFIP to determine SFHAs as well as the adequacy of the education and notice provided to borrowers outside of SFHAs about their true risk exposure. Disasters such as this expose the serious limits of the federal government's disaster preparedness strategy and should compel this Committee to investigate the issues and meaningfully consider

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling

Page 2

August 25, 2016

solutions. That is why it is so important that this Committee hold a field hearing to hear from local officials and residents, and get a firsthand look at the risks we are seeking to mitigate with the NFIP.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



MAXINE WATERS
Ranking Member



EMANUEL CLEAVER
Ranking Member, Subcommittee
On Housing and Insurance



CEDRIC L. RICHMOND
Member of Congress (LA-2)

cc: Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer