

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 28, 2014

The Honorable Julian Castro  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 Seventh Street, SW, Room 10120  
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Castro:

As we approach the ninth Anniversaries of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, we recognize the great strides made in helping the impacted citizens of Louisiana recover from the devastation of these storms. That said, there is still work to be done. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) continues to be an important partner as the Louisiana Office of Community Development Disaster Recovery Unit (OCD-DRU) nears the end of the Road Home program. As the Office of Community Development works to meet its obligations to HUD and pursue non-compliant households per the terms of HUD's approval of the Road Home program, we ask that you continue to consider the context in which many of our constituents made their Road Home covenants.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were historic storms and the economic, fiscal, and emotional wounds they caused are still unhealed in many communities, especially in the hardest hit Orleans, Cameron, Calcasieu, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Jefferson, and St. Tammany Parishes. It is imperative to understand what our constituents were going through immediately following the storms. During a time of extreme turmoil while inundated with challenges, our constituents took a lifeline that was offered to their families and warmly welcomed assistance from their neighbors and their government. In addition to crippling hurricanes, our State has also faced an unprecedented oil spill that brought local economies to the edge of hardship, a governor that has failed to lower healthcare costs by expanding Medicaid, decreased mental health services, increased tuition costs and a challenging job market for those in underinvested areas. In light of the recent trajectory of events in the past decade, we feel that the homeowners that made good faith attempts, to restore their homes and follow their Road Home covenants, should be treated with the utmost respect and fairness.

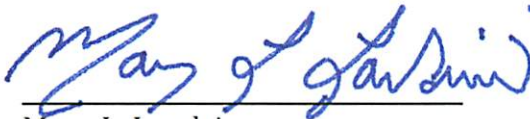
We are fully aware that there are some grantees that engaged in fraudulent behavior and utilized the funds in obviously improper ways and they should be held accountable. However, where there is strong evidence that homeowners utilized the funds to rebuild their homes and their lives, we encourage you to examine each on a case by case basis to allow for the proper context to be presented. We also ask that you work with the

OCD-DRU to consider an alternative process by which homeowners must demonstrate compliance with their Road Home covenants, which we have been told is a main reason many covenant holders are non-compliant.

As you may know, earlier this year several of our hard working citizens, often low income, received letters requiring them to return portions of Road Home grants they received seven and eight years ago. This is an incredible hardship for anyone to bear but especially for our constituents. This is why we encourage flexibility, forgiveness where appropriate, and most of all human compassion and understanding for decisions made in a time of extreme duress, pain and uncertainty. In closing, we ask for any information that you may now provide on this matter and look forward to hearing any updates from you throughout this process.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration and with kindest regards, we are

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu  
U.S. Senator



Cedric L. Richmond  
Member of Congress