Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 2, 2016

The Honorable Chris Christie
Governor
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Christie,

We have been informed by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that there were several problems with New Jersey's National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC) application, which resulted in our state being awarded a mere $15 million of the nearly $1 billion designated for the program. While we are disappointed to learn of these issues, we would like to understand how this happened. However, HUD has informed our offices that we cannot receive those details until after the state requests a meeting and is briefed on the matter. As a result, we strongly urge the state to request a meeting from HUD and allow delegation members and staff to join such a briefing.

As communities across New Jersey still are struggling to recover from several extreme weather events that have hit our state, we need to do all we can to ensure that homeowners and business owners receive the support they need to rebuild and protect against future storms. United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Julian Castro said the state submitted "a weaker application" when it came to leveraging non-federal funds and the scalability of projects. It is especially disappointing that our state's application was not strong enough to match the very real need here in New Jersey.

Secretary Castro noted that feedback was provided on each application, and applicants were able to resubmit their applications to incorporate that feedback. Given that the state seemingly had the opportunity to address deficiencies in its application before awards were issued, it is troubling that New Jersey still received such a small share of the funding. As a result, we respectfully ask you to provide responses to the following questions about New Jersey's NDRC application:

- Did HUD or the Rockefeller Foundation provide recommendations or offer technical assistance to improve New Jersey's application? Specifically, did they provide comments and/or raise concerns with the leveraging of non-federal funds and the scalability of projects proposed?
    - If so, will you share all correspondence related to the technical assistance or recommendations provided?

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- New York was able to raise $405.8 million in direct and supporting leverage to support their application for $500 million dollars in NDRC funding. It appears that New Jersey would have been able to raise $63.45 million in leveraged funding if its application for $326 million was approved, however this is never explicitly stated in the application.
    - Can you confirm how much the State would have been able to leverage if the complete application was approved?
    - Additionally, did HUD or the Rockefeller Foundation communicate concerns to the state about the lack of leveraged funds in New Jersey's application?
- HUD has informed us that the State has 120 days to request a briefing on New Jersey's application.
    - Will the state request a briefing on New Jersey's application? If so, will you allow Members of New Jersey's Congressional Delegation, or their staff, to join such a briefing?

The New Jersey Congressional delegation fought hard to ensure that $181 million was set aside for New Jersey and New York from the pool of funding available as part of the NDRC. However, at the end of the process, our state received less money than every other state or locality that was funded. While several questions still remain regarding the deficiencies in New Jersey's application, we believe that responses to the above questions will help ensure that we have a full accounting of exactly how New Jersey received this unacceptable result.

We appreciate your time and attention to our request and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress