

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 6, 2016

The Honorable Julian Castro
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street Southwest
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Castro:

On June 23, 2016, West Virginia was devastated by catastrophic flooding that claimed the lives of 23 people. Twelve West Virginia counties were declared federal disaster areas as a result of the flood. In some areas, as much as 10 inches of rain fell in a 24 hour period. Forecasters have described the event as a thousand year flood. More than three months later, five counties in our state remain under a state of emergency.

While a number of federal government agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), have provided significant assistance to West Virginia communities impacted by the flood, it is clear that significant unmet needs remain. On September 13, 2016, West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin wrote to President Obama and identified \$310 million in unmet needs resulting from the June flood that could be eligible for assistance from the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery program. Over 5,100 homes and businesses suffered a loss verified by FEMA and nearly 90 percent were not covered by flood insurance. Additionally, many of the areas impacted by this flood were already facing significant economic challenges making the cost of rebuilding homes and infrastructure all the more difficult to bear.

On September 29, 2016, President Obama signed H.R. 5325, the Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017, and Zika Response and Preparedness Act.¹ This legislation includes \$500 million for the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery program. Bipartisan congressional leaders and appropriators expressed clear legislative intent that West Virginia receive a fair portion of disaster recovery funds included in that bill to aid our state in rebuilding from the catastrophic floods.² We strongly support West Virginia's request for CDBG-DR funds appropriated last month, and we believe that this is an important down payment for our recovery.

¹ Pub. L. 114-223.

We understand that additional appropriations will be necessary in order to meet the true disaster recovery needs in West Virginia and in other states. We request that you include West Virginia's additional unmet needs in any disaster supplemental appropriations proposal that the Administration submits to Congress. While the recent \$500 million allocation of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funding will help jumpstart the recovery for West Virginia families and small businesses impacted by the June flood, we look forward to working with you and the President to ensure that we have the resources we need to rebuild safe, strong, sustainable communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

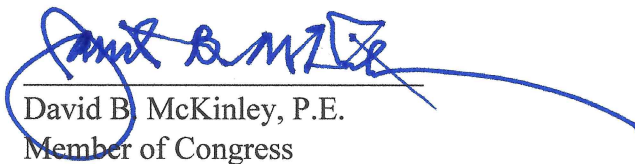
Sincerely,



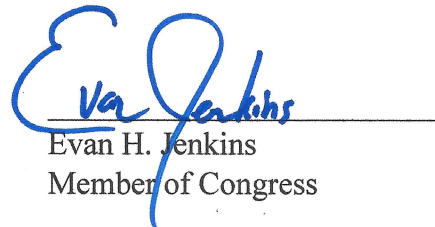
Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



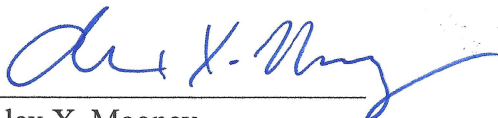
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress



Evan H. Jenkins
Member of Congress



Alex X. Mooney
Member of Congress

² 162 Cong. Rec. S5969 (daily ed. Sept. 22, 2016)(Remarks of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell)(“It contains a sufficient down payment on flood relief for many States, including . . . West Virginia . . . [.]”); 162 Cong. Rec. S6105 (daily ed. Sept. 27, 2016)(Remarks of Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran)(“The bill also includes \$500 million to help Louisiana, West Virginia, and other states recover from devastating floods.”); Id. (Remarks of Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee Member Shelley Moore Capito)(“The legislation we will vote on today takes an important step to address flood recovery in disaster-stricken portions of West Virginia and certainly for our friends in Louisiana . . . [.]”); 162 Cong. Rec. S6166 (daily ed. Sept. 28, 2016) (Remarks of Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid)(“I think West Virginia, which has an emergency declaration of \$310 million – that should be taken care of.”); 162 Cong. Rec. S6182 (daily ed. Sept. 28, 2016)(Remarks of Senate Appropriations Committee Vice-Chairman Barbara Mikulski (“I also want to say that it does contain disaster relief for flooded communities like Louisiana and West Virginia . . . [.]”)