



March 13, 2018

Commissioner George P. Bush
Texas General Land Office
Community Development and Revitalization Program
P.O. Box 12873
Austin, TX 78711-2873

SUBJECT: State of Texas Plan for Disaster Recovery: Hurricane Harvey

Dear Commissioner Bush,

Harris County appreciates the work that you and your team are putting in to our recovery and the recovery statewide. We definitely appreciate your consideration of our comments and understanding of the local need for further funding for buyouts in Harris County under the first Hurricane Harvey Disaster Recovery Action Plan published earlier this year.

In discussions with your staff within the last week, we understand that the second Hurricane Harvey Disaster Recovery Action Plan is nearing publication; however, we are concerned with the lack of meaningful consultation during the development of this plan. Harris County has recovery needs unique to its population and damages that may not simply be reflected in readily available data sources. Additionally, Harris County is completing extensive work in the preparation of local recovery planning, and program development. In the absence of consultation with our local experts, and planning partners, any draft plan will be wholly inadequate to meet our local needs for recovery.

Furthermore, in testimony provided by Heather LaGrone and Pete Philips at the House Land and Resource Management Committee hearing last Thursday; we understand that the draft plan will include several state operated recovery programs. The programs represent set-asides at the state level that will reduce the resources available to recover in a planned and coordinated approach locally. Without a coordinated funding plan connected to locally operated programming, recovery will occur in a non-cohesive way that will result in less resilience to future storms, and could also lead to duplication of efforts. Thus, as per this correspondence, Harris County is respectfully requesting your commitment to a State Recovery Plan that will include the following:

- Specific funding set-asides for Harris County and the City of Houston based on the large scale local damage that allows the County and City to submit local Disaster Recovery Action Plans based on the eligible activities permitted within the State's plan;
- Inclusion of planning funding as a part of the County and City set-aside amounts to allow for the necessary local planning efforts to ensure a resilient recovery.
- Coordination and meaningful consultation to ensure the State plan is inclusive of local recovery needs, and details on the data analysis and formula utilized by your office in determining local funding set-asides.

Your commitment to a County funding set-aside within the State's Plan will lead to locally directed and coordinated recovery with the ultimate goal of a more resilient Harris County. Likewise, a similar set-aside for our City of Houston partner will allow the County and City to coordinate to fully recover and rebuild to a more resilient region.

Your careful consideration and approval of our request will be greatly welcomed, and appreciated, and will help progress towards recovery for our residents.

Sincerely,



Ed Emmett
County Judge