

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

March 13, 2018

The Honorable Brock Long  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Long:

We write in strong support of the City of Houston's proposal to utilize volunteer hours as local match against FEMA funding for Hurricane Harvey across all categories of disaster assistance.

As you know, Texans' willingness to step up and help a neighbor was a recurring story through the devastating floods of Hurricane Harvey last August. Houstonians were outstanding examples of volunteerism, from manning rescue boats to working in shelters and helping to clean out flooded homes. However, the storm left the City facing billions of dollars in damage to homes, infrastructure and small businesses.

As you know, volunteer hours logged in response to the storm are typically accepted as local match for FEMA Categories A and B (debris removal and emergency protective measures). In addition, the City is proposing that it be allowed to continue tracking Harvey-related volunteer hours as match against categories C-G. As your staff recently indicated, we understand that officials in your Agency believe they have authority to allow volunteer hours that can be associated with "permanent work," but we understand that the system needs to be designed and implemented.

We are supportive of a creative, broad interpretation of FEMA rules to begin implementing this volunteer initiative, and are also interested in hearing from you if you believe that changes to federal law may be needed to make it easier for FEMA to put the City of Houston's proposal into action. Moving forward to implement this innovative, community-focused initiative will demonstrate the Administration's commitment to helping the people of Texas rebuild after the most devastating rain event our nation has ever experienced. It will also yield significant savings for local taxpayers, and stretch federal recovery funds to benefit more citizens. Finally, with this expanded volunteer match program we will recognize, honor and encourage the volunteer spirit displayed by so many Houstonians and Texans displayed during Harvey's deluge.

Thank you for considering this important proposal, and please advise of any assistance we can provide in helping our nation's fourth-largest city – a critical domestic and international economic engine – emerge from Harvey stronger and in a manner that ensures improved economic vitality and quality of life for all Houstonians.

Sincerely,



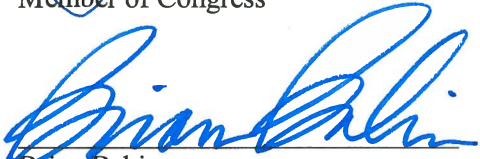
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John Culberson  
Member of Congress



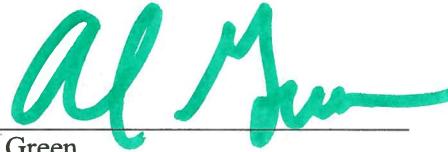
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Gert Green  
Member of Congress



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Brian Babin  
Member of Congress



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Al Green  
Member of Congress



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Pete Olson  
Member of Congress