

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

June 27, 2008

The Honorable R. David Paulison  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, Southwest  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Paulison:

In September 2007, we wrote to you with concerns about the safety and availability of temporary emergency housing used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) following catastrophes. With the 2008 hurricane season now under way, we are pleased to see that the Agency has come forth with a disaster housing plan for this year, but remain concerned about what the plan means for Floridians. This issue continues to be of critical importance to our constituents, many of whom have been affected by multiple hurricanes in the past four years.

Reports surfaced last year that many of the travel trailers and mobile homes FEMA was using to house disaster victims along the Gulf Coast contained high levels of formaldehyde. As a result, FEMA decided to cease using travel trailers for emergency housing and pledged to test mobile homes for formaldehyde before use in future disasters. We applaud FEMA for its decision.

In the Agency's revised plan and in recent media reports, however, it is our understanding that FEMA plans to resume the use of travel trailers for emergency housing in catastrophic and extraordinary situations. While we understand that the trailers would be an option of last resort, we are gravely concerned that they provide an option that is, and has already proven to be, infeasible.

Realize, if hotels/motels, rentals and mobile homes had been a viable option following the 2004 storms in Florida, nearly 18,000 families would not have been placed in travel trailers. Similarly, had hotels/motels, rentals and mobile homes been a viable option following the 2005 hurricanes in Florida and across the Gulf Coast, more than 120,000 families would not have been placed in travel trailers. Additionally, with the new stipulation that travel trailers will only be an option for a period of less than six months, the trailers should be, again, taken off the table as an option. Given our past experiences with Charley, Frances, Ivan, Jeanne, Dennis, Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, a disaster housing mission is extremely unlikely to be completed in six month's time.

As Members of Congress that represent significant areas of Florida that are located in floodways, we are profoundly troubled about the current lack of emergency

housing availability for this hurricane season already upon us. As you know, by law, FEMA cannot use mobile homes if they are to be located in floodways or in coastal high hazard areas unless they meet the specific criteria under 44 CFR Part 9, Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands, and the regulations under 44 CFR Part 10, Environmental Considerations. We remain extremely concerned that FEMA has not provided another interim housing solution for the areas located in floodways.

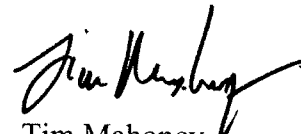
Any replication of even one of the storms from 2004 or 2005 could potentially render tens of thousands of disaster victims across the southern U.S. homeless, with no viable emergency housing solution from the agency designed to protect them. To avoid that end, we urgently request that FEMA provide us with a detailed overview of the "Innovative Forms of Interim Housing" alternatives FEMA is reviewing for use in floodplains this year. Floridians do not have the luxury of waiting for the Joint Housing Solutions Group's findings. We urge FEMA to explore alternative cutting-edge technologies that make for faster, safer, smarter and formaldehyde-free solutions. It is abundantly clear that the old way of thinking – and of doing business – is no longer an option. As we learned in Florida and in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, quick and safe housing is one of the most critical resources we must provide the public after a disaster.

Hurricane experts have already predicted an active 2008 hurricane season. We must expeditiously ensure we have a sound and safe emergency housing plan in place **before** the next disaster strikes our state. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



Tim Mahoney  
Member of Congress