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October 27, 2016

The Honorable Julian Castro  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 Seventh St SW  
Room 10120  
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Castro:

I write to urge you to visit and intercede immediately on behalf of the tenants of the Westlake Apartments, a federally subsidized Section 8 complex in Savannah, Georgia.

On October 7, 2016, Hurricane Matthew brought devastating destruction and hurricane conditions not seen in Georgia for decades. Due to the proximity of the storm to Savannah, this 100 unit community followed the advice of local officials to evacuate. Upon their return, many families have come home to unsanitary and unlivable conditions. More than three weeks after the storm, many residents of Westlake Apartments are still without temporary housing assistance or restoration and air quality action plans.

I have been in contact with FEMA, Aspen Company/Treetop Development (Westlake Apartments property management and owners), Savannah Public Housing Authority, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and HUD's regional office, with little to no coordination occurring on the ground. It has become evident that HUD is failing in its responsibilities, and it seems that HUD is treating these displaced families like statistics and not human beings.

I request that you, Secretary Castro, visit Westlake Apartments to assess the damage and provide a detailed plan to immediately get the tenants into safe housing.

I also request answers to the following questions:

- Why can HUD not provide my office with complete and accurate information twenty days after the storm?
- When did HUD determine 22 units were unfit for HUD subsidies and below HUD standards?
- When did HUD notify the property owner that 22 units were deemed below HUD standards?

- Are there any remaining tenants displaced or living in units not up to HUD's standard? If so, what is the exact timeline and process to get them into safe housing?
- What enforcement options are there to ensure the property owner complies with their contractual responsibility to provide alternative housing to tenants in units found to be below HUD standards?
- Is there a penalty for the property owner for failing to act within a timely manner of the storm hitting Savannah and impacting the Westlake Apartments?
- What level of negligence by the property owner would result in removal of the section 8 subsidy?

Making sure that these residents receive assistance is my top priority. I appreciate your immediate attention to this issue, and I look forward to a direct resolution to these concerns and timely answers to my questions.

Sincerely,



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Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress