

Dear Secretary Donovan:

New Jersey residents remain grateful to you and your office for the ongoing priority you and the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force have given the rebuilding effort here. Your commitment to ensuring that the region rebounds in the best possible way is reassuring to so many who have had their lives devastated by Superstorm Sandy.

As you know, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie has submitted to your office his final Sandy Recovery Action Plan, detailing how he intends for the first round of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds to be disbursed. A broad cross-section of organizations and individuals took the opportunity to submit comments within a very small public comment period to the draft plan, providing practical suggestions for how to make the plan fairer and more forward-looking. A selection of those comments may be found here. [\[insert link\]](#)

We write to express our concern that the final plan for the \$1.8 billion submitted has taken an insufficient account of those comments, and, as a result, the plan still requires significant improvement to ensure a sustainable and fair rebuilding that includes everybody impacted by Sandy. Your approval of the plan, as submitted, will result in an unprecedented amount of federal funds being spent in a way that lacks fairness for all New Jerseyans. Further, the submitted plan promotes rebuilding communities just as they were, without any substantial consideration for planning for rising sea levels and changing weather conditions. We can do better, to rebuild stronger and more inclusively.

A quick federal response to the plan with positive adjustments will ensure that the recovery process continues to move forward expeditiously. Those changes will maximize the opportunity for New Jersey to rebuild in a more strategic, more sustainable and more equitable way. We ask that you require as a condition of the plan's approval the changes described in the comments, in order to make New Jersey's rebuilding effort fairer and more resilient. All of New Jersey's residents, businesses and municipalities, as well as the state itself, should be able to look forward to a recovery that benefits both current residents and future generations.

Thank you for your immediate attention.