

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6515

October 31, 2017

The Honorable William B. "Brock" Long
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
500 C St. S.W.
Washington, DC 20472

Mr. Douglas Lamont
Senior Career Official Performing the Duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Administrator Long and Mr. Lamont:

This hurricane season stands to be one of the most destructive in the past decade. Together, hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria resulted in nearly \$500 billion in damages across the United States. Your agencies are and will continue to play an essential role in the rebuilding and recovery efforts for these areas. In this regard, it is critical that both FEMA and USACE prioritize local small businesses in the recovery process. Doing so can deliver the twin benefits of increasing local economic activity, while also providing taxpayers with quality, cost-effective goods and services.

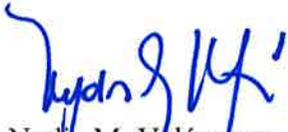
In the Stafford Act, Congress recognized the importance of local business participation in disaster response and recovery by requiring that federal contracts for disaster assistance activities to be given, whenever feasible, to those residing or doing business primarily in the area affected. Local firms often have the greatest knowledge of – and stake in – their communities, thereby positioning them to be efficient and effective vendors. FEMA and USACE are in distinct positions to assist small businesses by supporting their participation in cleanup and recovery contracts.

In order to better assess local small business participation in response to recent hurricanes, I am requesting regular reports from both FEMA and USACE. For Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, please provide a list of all contracting actions taken for each hurricane, including the dollar amount, contractor name and location, and any certification or designation that the successful contractor possesses at the time of award.

Additionally, please provide information as to what steps your agencies are taking to ensure that the contracting actions related to these hurricanes follow the Stafford Act locality preference contained in 42 U.S.C. 5150, which states that agencies should advocate for increased small business presence in disaster contracting programs.

I look forward to your reply and thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly or my procurement staffer, Halimah Najieb-Locke on this matter at 202-225-4038.

Sincerely,



Nydia M. Velázquez
Ranking Member