

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2561 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6515

August 24, 2023

The Honorable Isabella Casillas Guzman
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Guzman:

The House Committee on Small Business (the Committee) was saddened to see the destruction caused by fires on Maui, Hawaii. The lives lost can never be replaced. Survivors are now navigating tremendous recovery efforts. The Small Business Administration (SBA) assists survivors mainly through disaster loans that the Agency has provided since 1953.¹ Unfortunately, Maui survivors are reporting a lackluster government response and thus the Committee seeks information and requests a staff level briefing on the SBA's response to this tragedy.²

Aside from the SBA's disaster loans that help homeowners and business owners recover and rebuild, the SBA also assists through Business Recovery Centers and by coordinating with the Resource Partner Network comprised of Small Business Development Centers, SCORE Chapters, Women's Business Centers, and Veterans Business Outreach Centers. All these efforts are designed to help Americans in times of need.

The Committee is keenly aware of the challenges that disaster efforts face and how the SBA helps survivors rebuild. When Americans are in need, the resources their tax dollars fund should, at minimum, work effectively. The Committee is interested in ensuring that these resources are being administered properly. We therefore request a staff level briefing on the SBA's response to the Maui fires, as soon as possible but no later than August 31, 2023. In addition, we request the following documents and information, as soon as possible but no later than September 7, 2023:

1. A copy of the SBA's immediate response plan and efforts underway to assist those impacted.

¹ CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE, R47245, SBA DISASTER LOAN LIMITS: POLICY OPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS (Mar. 1, 2023).

² Yaron Steinbuch, *Emotional Maui resident rips Biden's 'slap in the face' wildfire response: 'Where's the president?'*, NY POST (Aug. 18, 2023).

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2. The average SBA disaster loan review, approval, and disbursement times for loans associated with the Maui fires.
3. The status of all applications including the number of applicants, the number of approvals and denials, and the number and amount of disbursements made.
4. The levels and effectiveness of coordination between SBA officials and FEMA.
5. Status of any Business Recovery Centers (BRC) opened and the current plan to open additional BRCs.
6. The SBA's long-term plan to assist homeowners and business owners impacted by the fires on Maui.
7. Any efforts by the SBA to prevent SBA officials from making social media posts of pictures from Maui.
8. The impact of recently moving the SBA's disaster loans under the Office of Capital Access, currently overseen by an Acting Associate Administrator.
9. What efforts the SBA is taking to directly reach survivors without the use of internet.

To schedule the delivery of responsive documents or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Small Business Majority Staff at (202) 225-5821. The Committee on Small Business has broad authority to investigate "problems of all types of small business" under House Rule X. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

In God We Trust,



Roger Williams
Chairman
Committee on Small Business

cc: The Honorable Nydia M. Velasquez, Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business