

Chairman Steve Chabot (R-OH)
Committee on Small Business
“Surveying Storms: A Deeper Dive into SBA’s Disaster Response”
September 5, 2018

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Good morning. I call this hearing to order. Thank you all for being with us.

On April 5, 2017, soon after being confirmed, Administrator McMahon provided testimony to this Committee. At that hearing, the Administrator said SBA’s Disaster Relief program is quote “paramount” unquote.

Approximately 5 months after she testified at that hearing, Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Texas. A few days later Hurricane Irma made landfall in Florida. And again, a few days later, Hurricane Maria hit the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The 2017 storm season, by all accounts, was historic. The nation was responding to three devastating hurricanes all at the same time. As we know, SBA plays a large role in the long-term recovery needs for the United States. Its Disaster Loan Program, which provides fixed-term and low-interest direct loans to victims is vital for businesses and homeowners as they begin to replace, repair, and rebuild.

Given that we are roughly a year out from those massive and damaging storms making landfall, it is imperative that we spend time reviewing SBA’s response efforts. Going back many years, Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy proved extremely challenging for SBA.

We are here today to gain a better understanding of whether the changes made over the years at SBA have made improvements in their disaster response. I look forward to hearing more about the outreach SBA made during the 2017 storm season to victims on the ground after these disasters.

Additionally, I am interested in hearing how efficiently quickly SBA was able process loans to those impacted by the storms. Finally, I hope we will hear more about what SBA learned from the 2017 storm season and how they are preparing for future disasters.

As rebuilding efforts are ongoing, and continue even today, it is important we evaluate the 2017 response. Victims of storms count on SBA and their response during their darkest days.

I agree with Administrator McMahon, this program is paramount.

I now yield to the Ranking Member for her opening remarks.

