

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 10, 2024

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Schatz and Ranking Member Hyde-Smith:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, we ask that you provide robust funding for energy efficient and climate resilient investments across the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

As you know, energy efficient and climate resilient investments are essential to bringing American housing into the 21st century. During 2023 alone, a record 28 natural disasters—from severe flooding in Vermont, to catastrophic wildfires in Hawaii, to heavy hailstorms in Minnesota—caused roughly \$93 billion in damage and, tragically, 492 fatalities.¹ Investing in energy efficient and climate resilient housing programs is a critical tool to help our communities respond to our changing climate and climate-related disasters in the years to come.

There is strong precedent for such funding. Since 2017, Congress has appropriated billions of dollars to HUD to fortify its housing stock in the face of climate change.² And in FY24, Congress advanced HUD's energy efficiency and climate resiliency initiatives, including by appropriating \$150 million for the Indian Housing Block Grant program and \$75 million for the Choice Neighborhoods program. Climate resilient investments, such as those that go towards elevating structures, reinforcing roofs, and utilizing fire resistant materials, safeguard our communities and decrease the cost of repairing buildings and structures after a natural disaster.³

¹ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *U.S. Struck with Historic Number of Billion-Dollar Disasters in 2023* (online at <https://www.noaa.gov/news/us-struck-with-historic-number-of-billion-dollar-disasters-in-2023>) (accessed Apr. 29, 2024); National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *2023: A Historic Year of U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disaster* (online at <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/blogs/beyond-data/2023-historic-year-us-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate-disasters>) (accessed Apr. 29, 2024).

² Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Climate Action Plan* (November 2021) (online at www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/Main/documents/HUD-Climate-Action-Plan.pdf).

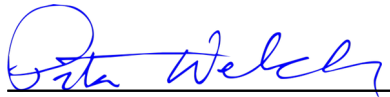
³ Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Climate Resilience and Disaster Recovery at HUD* (online at https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/CPD/documents/Climate_Resilience_Disaster_Recovery_at_HUD.pdf) (accessed Apr. 29, 2024).

HUD's expenditures on utilities—roughly \$7 billion annually, or nearly 15% of the agency's total budget—also create a unique opportunity for energy efficiency investments.⁴ Congress should continue to provide funding for HUD to reduce the agency's utility costs and further energy efficiency efforts in its assisted and financed properties. These investments fuel much-needed improvements in HUD's housing stock, such as weatherization, installation of better-performing HVAC, and upgrades to energy efficient household appliances.

These efforts can also reduce America's carbon footprint. The real estate sector accounts for nearly one third of the country's total carbon emissions, and the roughly 4.5 million public and assisted housing units under HUD's administration generate over 19 million metric tons of carbon emissions annually.⁵ Through targeted investments, the agency can simultaneously eliminate energy waste in its housing stock and meaningfully cut back on the country's overall consumption of fossil fuels.

We ask that you support our request to invest in our communities and provide HUD with the funding it needs to achieve the agency's energy efficiency and climate resiliency priorities. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

⁴ Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Climate Action Plan* (November 2021) (online at www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/Main/documents/HUD-Climate-Action-Plan.pdf).

⁵ Environmental Protection Agency, *Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions* (online at <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>) (accessed Apr. 29, 2024); Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Climate Action Plan* (November 2021) (online at www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/Main/documents/HUD-Climate-Action-Plan.pdf).

Jeanne Shaheen

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United States Senator

Bernard Sanders

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United States Senator

Mazie Hirono

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Edward J. Markey

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