

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling  
Chairman  
Financial Services Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hensarling:

We are writing to follow up on the request for a field hearing in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, which we sent to you on August 25, 2016. The urgency of the situation is clear as we continue to hear more about the extent of the damage from the flooding, and we believe that this should be a top priority for this Committee. As Representative Graves recently said in a news article, “you can’t understand the gravity of this unless you see it.”<sup>1</sup>

In the aftermath of the flooding, residents of the Baton Rouge, Louisiana area are returning to severely damaged homes and streets that are still covered in debris. With at least 13 people dead as a result of the flood, some of these families are grieving for more than the loss of their homes and possessions. The most recent estimates show that more than 160,000 homes were affected, and over 140,000 individuals and families have registered for assistance. These figures will only continue to rise as the recovery and rebuilding process continues.

Although hundreds of thousands of homes were affected, only 28,700 claims have been filed under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). This small figure should raise alarm bells for the members of this Committee. We must reconsider the signals that we are sending to individuals who may be outside of the special flood hazard area on the flood insurance rate maps, but are still very much in danger of flooding. Thousands of homeowners and renters were not required to purchase the coverage and therefore believed that they were safe from flooding. Without the benefit of insurance coverage, these individuals are now left to pick up the pieces with federal disaster assistance as their only option.

As the committee with jurisdiction over the NFIP, we have a responsibility to the victims of this tragic incident to look for ways to better protect the American people from this kind of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.theadvertiser.com/story/news/local/louisiana/2016/09/01/la-lawmakers-seek-more-flood-recovery-money/89644686/>

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disaster in the future. I urge you to grant our request for a field hearing so that our Committee can do just that.

Sincerely,



MAXINE WATERS

Ranking Member



EMANUEL CLEAVER, II

Ranking Member, Subcommittee on  
Housing and Insurance



CEDRIC L. RICHMOND

Member of Congress (LA-2)

cc: Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer