

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

July 20, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We write to highlight the urgent need for substantial affordable housing infrastructure investments as part of the broader effort to repair and modernize our nation's critical infrastructure systems. Without proportional affordable housing investments, there is no path for an equitable recovery and long term financial stability for low and middle income American families.

If we fail to act now, our nation's economic growth will continue to be held back by the over 7 million unit deficit in affordable homes. Our current low affordable housing inventory is a significant driver of higher housing costs, which in turn strains limited federal rental assistance programs. Despite the clear and urgent need, only one in four households who qualify for housing assistance receives it due to decades of chronic underfunding by Congress. Millions of eligible households are currently stuck on waiting lists – often for several years – hoping for help to come sooner.

The long wait for help sets families further back year after year. Eight million of the lowest-income renters pay at least half of their income on rent, leaving them without the resources they need to put food on the table, purchase needed medications, or make ends meet. Coronavirus and the compounding effects of explosive wildfires and extreme weather events have made the need for affordable housing more clear than ever in both rural and urban communities. Even before the coronavirus pandemic, fifty-four million rural residents lived in areas that had either a severe need or moderately severe need for the production of more affordable rental housing.

The President's call to invest more than \$300 billion in housing in the American Jobs Plan is a critical first step, but we must ensure that these resources are targeted to help the millions who pay more than half of their income on rent today. The American Jobs Plan laudably includes funds for affordable housing development, and capital investments are indeed needed to repair public housing and build and preserve affordable and supportive housing through the national Housing Trust Fund. Without rental assistance, however, people below the poverty line generally will not be able to afford to live in homes built with investments in the American Jobs Plan. Development subsidies typically do not cover the ongoing costs of operating and managing housing, and the lowest-income households cannot afford rents sufficient to cover those costs. We must ensure that any homes built with these federal investments are affordable to people with the greatest needs.

For these reasons, we urge you to include at a minimum the following key affordable housing infrastructure programs in the Build Back Better infrastructure package.

- Build on recent investments in short-term, emergency rental assistance by providing multi-year mandatory funding for a major housing voucher expansion to pave the way toward universal rental assistance.
- At least \$70 billion to address the Public Housing repair backlog.
- \$45 billion for the National Housing Trust Fund, of which \$26 billion should be reserved for permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness.

While these programs and funding levels merit additional emphasis, this list should not be regarded as a complete list of all the ways we all can or should act to lower housing costs for American families. For example, Congress should make additional investments to preserve and create affordable housing in rural and tribal communities, address lead-based paint and other home health hazards, increase access to affordable homeownership for people and communities who have been too often locked out, and ensure that all communities provide access to opportunity for those who live and work there. However, we respectfully encourage you to consider these three principal recommendations as minimum housing investments that will help ensure the Build Back Better infrastructure package delivers broad and equitable benefits to all Americans.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ritchie Torres  
United States Representative

/s/ Emanuel Cleaver, II  
United States Representative

/s/ Kai Kahele  
United States Representative

/s/ Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
United States Representative

/s/ Linda T. Sánchez  
United States Representative

/s/ Carolyn B. Maloney  
United States Representative

/s/ Hakeem Jeffries  
United States Representative

/s/ Lori Trahan  
United States Representative

/s/ Ed Perlmutter  
United States Representative

/s/ Suzanne Bonamici  
United States Representative

/s/ Sara Jacobs  
United States Representative

/s/ Jesús G. “Chuy” García  
United States Representative

/s/ Robin L. Kelly  
United States Representative

/s/ Rashida Tlaib  
United States Representative

/s/ Ann McLane Kuster  
United States Representative

/s/ Jerrold Nadler  
United States Representative

/s/ Zoe Lofgren  
United States Representative

/s/ Earl Blumenauer  
United States Representative

/s/ Frederica S. Wilson  
United States Representative

/s/ Anna G. Eshoo  
United States Representative

/s/ Ilhan Omar  
United States Representative

/s/ Jerry McNerney  
United States Representative

/s/ Darren Soto  
United States Representative

/s/ Stephen F. Lynch  
United States Representative

/s/ Mondaire Jones  
United States Representative

/s/ Colin Allred  
United States Representative

/s/ Brenda L. Lawrence  
United States Representative

/s/ Jake Auchincloss  
United States Representative

/s/ Marie Newman  
United States Representative

/s/ Nanette Diaz Barragán  
United States Representative

/s/ A. Donald McEachin  
United States Representative

/s/ Karen Bass  
United States Representative

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez  
United States Representative

/s/ Tony Cárdenas  
United States Representative

/s/ Mike Quigley  
United States Representative

/s/ Gerald E. Connolly  
United States Representative

/s/ Ted W. Lieu  
United States Representative

/s/ Dina Titus  
United States Representative

/s/ Gwen Moore  
United States Representative

/s/ Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
United States Representative

/s/ C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
United States Representative

/s/ Barbara Lee  
United States Representative

/s/ Adam Smith  
United States Representative

/s/ Melanie Stansbury  
United States Representative

/s/ Marilyn Strickland  
United States Representative

/s/ Ro Khanna  
United States Representative

/s/ Joe Neguse  
United States Representative

/s/ Peter Welch  
United States Representative

/s/ James P. McGovern  
United States Representative

/s/ Alan Lowenthal  
United States Representative

/s/ Raúl M. Grijalva  
United States Representative

/s/ David N. Cicilline  
United States Representative

/s/ Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
United States Representative

/s/ Mark Pocan  
United States Representative

/s/ Eleanor Holmes Norton  
United States Representative

/s/ Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.  
United States Representative

/s/ Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
United States Representative

/s/ Adriano Espaillat  
United States Representative

/s/ Judy Chu  
United States Representative

/s/ Nikema Williams  
United States Representative

/s/ André Carson  
United States Representative

/s/ Sheila Jackson Lee  
United States Representative

/s/ Grace Meng  
United States Representative

/s/ Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
United States Representative

/s/ Cori Bush  
United States Representative

/s/ Steve Cohen  
United States Representative

/s/ David Trone  
United States Representative

/s/ Ayanna Pressley  
United States Representative

/s/ Mark DeSaulnier  
United States Representative

/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
United States Representative

/s/ Bonnie Watson Coleman  
United States Representative

/s/ Bobby L. Rush  
United States Representative

/s/ Yvette D. Clarke  
United States Representative

/s/ Mary Gay Scanlon  
United States Representative

/s/ Jimmy Panetta  
United States Representative

/s/ Mike Levin  
United States Representative

/s/ Jan Schakowsky  
United States Representative

/s/ Kathleen M. Rice  
United States Representative

/s/ Al Lawson  
United States Representative

/s/ Mark Takano  
United States Representative

/s/ Stacey E. Plaskett  
United States Representative

/s/ Andy Levin  
United States Representative

/s/ Gregory W. Meeks  
United States Representative

/s/ Marc Veasey  
United States Representative

/s/ Thomas R. Suozzi  
United States Representative

/s/ Albio Sires  
United States Representative

/s/ Chellie Pingree  
United States Representative

/s/ Pramila Jayapal  
United States Representative

/s/ Lisa Blunt Rochester  
United States Representative

/s/ Ruben Gallego  
United States Representative

/s/ Katie Porter  
United States Representative

/s/ Deborah K. Ross  
United States Representative

/s/ Jackie Speier  
United States Representative

/s/ Doris Matsui  
United States Representative

/s/ Danny K. Davis  
United States Representative

/s/ Madeleine Dean  
United States Representative

/s/ Diana DeGette  
United States Representative

/s/ Antonio Delgado  
United States Representative

/s/ Val Demings  
United States Representative

/s/ Debbie Dingell  
United States Representative

/s/ Dwight Evans  
United States Representative

/s/ Vicente Gonzalez  
United States Representative

/s/ Al Green  
United States Representative

/s/ Jahana Hayes  
United States Representative

/s/ Steven Horsford  
United States Representative

/s/ Jared Huffman  
United States Representative