



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
COMMISSIONER DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

September 28, 2026

Lina Hidalgo
Harris County Judge
1001 Preston, Suite 911
Houston, Texas 77002

Dear Judge Hidalgo:

Since taking office nearly four years ago, I have repeatedly petitioned the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for additional time on behalf of local communities. As the deadline for Hurricane Harvey projects approached, I submitted another request supported by the Texas General Land Office's (GLO) performance record and my commitment to completing these critical projects. I am so excited to announce that HUD leadership recognized the GLO's progress and approved one final extension for Hurricane Harvey recovery funds. Today, we are notifying communities with eligible contracts about the one-year extension requirements and procedures.

The GLO is one of the most efficient and effective administrators of federal disaster recovery and mitigation grants in the United States. To date, the GLO has expended more than \$10 billion of disaster recovery funding, helped more than 14,000 Texans rebuild their homes – and their lives, and assisted thousands of communities in navigating the federal mandates and red-tape. We've earned HUD's trust by demonstrating our commitment to administering these funds effectively, efficiently, and in compliance with federal regulations. The GLO then once more made a compelling, data-driven case for the extension, and this HUD listened.

The GLO has more than \$1 billion invested in Harris County for infrastructure and mitigation projects. The \$750 million in mitigation funding was announced in May 2021. Shortly after taking office in 2023, I announced my decision to reallocate \$322,033,863 in unused Hurricane Harvey disaster recovery funds to Harris County for flood and drainage projects – reaffirming my commitment to keep these funds local. This decision was based on assurances of “shovel readiness” and the county's capacity, experience, and understanding of federal regulations needed to meet the federal deadline.

We continue to have grave concerns about Harris County continually failing to meet contract expenditure benchmarks for these vital and extremely rare infrastructure project funds. **Despite my significant reservations about the progress of these projects, this letter is to inform Harris County that the GLO worked with HUD to secure Harris County Flood Control (HCFCD) a final one-year extension to the existing Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) contract.**

The GLO is only able to extend this one-year contract extension thanks to the current leadership at HUD, who recognized the GLO's exemplary administration of more than \$14 billion across multiple grants and therefore granted the GLO's request for more time. HUD would not have granted this request without the GLO demonstrating "good cause" through timely expenditure of funds in eligible communities outside of Harris County and substantive proof that an extension will result in the remaining funding being used to benefit the deserving residents of disaster-impacted communities.

As I've said before, Harris County needs shovels, not scapegoats. In early June, I issued a statement informing the Harris County Commissioners Court and the residents it serves that the GLO has spent more than \$5 million of its own grant funding on a dedicated team responsible for federal grant guidance and technical support. These technical experts have conducted nearly one-thousand meetings to provide staff support to Harris County to ensure these projects are completed on time in accordance with the federal deadline. Three months later, there are still too few shovels in the ground.

The GLO will continue to provide technical assistance, but at the end of the day, the responsibility of completing the projects rests at the feet of Harris County. **While HUD's trust in the GLO's has earned Harris County an additional extension, I will be clear. No more delays will be tolerated.**

The HCFCD proposed a complicated and administratively burdensome plan in May and then voted to replace the Executive Director a month later. The GLO has done everything in our power to make this plan work. Unfortunately, more than four months later, Harris County has failed to provide the information necessary to meet HUD's requirements and almost no additional progress has been made on these projects.

With the additional year now available, the projects will proceed under their original proposals using the disaster recovery funds I allocated to Harris County more than three years ago. The GLO will revise the existing contracts, and the benchmarks will be adjusted to align with the one-year

extension. But in this contract, failure to meet each benchmark will result in the unused balance being reclaimed and reallocated to other shovel-ready projects not managed by HCFCD.

The time for excuses and missed benchmarks is over. No more extensions, no more excuses, just get it done.

For Texas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Buckingham", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

Commissioner, Texas General Land Office

c: Rodney Ellis, Harris County Commissioner Pct. 1
 Adrian Garcia, Harris County Commissioner Pct. 2
 Tom S. Ramsey, Harris County Commissioner Pct. 3
 Lesley Briones, Harris County Commissioner Pct. 4
 Marcus Stuckett, Harris County Flood Control District Executive Director