

By Administrator
Tuesday, 29 May 2018 08:22 -

Republican members of North Carolina's Congressional Delegation sent a letter to Governor Roy Cooper requesting information on the distribution of Hurricane Matthew recovery funds provided to the state of North Carolina through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) Program.

In the letter to Governor Cooper, members of the Congressional Delegation ask for clarification on why the State of North Carolina has been slow to allocate Hurricane Matthew recovery funds, with HUD recently designating North Carolina as a “slow spender” not within the monthly spending pace required to fully use the funds by the closeout date of August 2023.

Since the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Matthew's landfall, North Carolina's Congressional Delegation has been working on a bipartisan basis to secure federal funding to assist in the state's ongoing recovery efforts. In February, the N.C. Congressional Delegation secured roughly \$168,000,000 in CDBG-DR funds to support North Carolina's family and community needs, including housing, infrastructure, and jobs. This additional CDBG-DR funding added to the \$236,500,000 that the N.C. Congressional Delegation has secured in past spending bills.

“It is deeply concerning that these federal disaster dollars are not being released when many North Carolina families are still living in temporary housing provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA),” **the members wrote.** “We strongly urge your office in consultation with North Carolina Emergency Management to distribute funding quicker. Timely and efficient administration of these secured funds is critically important to families and businesses across North Carolina still recovering from hurricane Matthew. Any further delay may also have unacceptable consequences on any future disaster aid requests.”

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Full text of the letter to Governor Cooper is below.

May 25, 2018

Dear Governor Cooper:

As members of the North Carolina Congressional delegation, we write to request additional information about the distribution of funds provided to the State through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR) Program. It is our understanding that to date, North Carolina has received \$404 million from HUD for 2016 Hurricane Matthew recovery efforts, but as of May 2018, nearly two years later, the State has failed to allocate significant portions of these funds. Our Congressional delegation remains committed to the successful recovery of our state and its families and businesses.

On October 8, 2016, Hurricane Matthew made landfall in North Carolina, devastating the

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central and eastern areas of our state. The severity of the flooding impacted homes and businesses far beyond the boundaries of the 100-year floodplain. The storm caused power outages in more than 800,000 households, displaced nearly 3,750 residents from their homes, shutdown 635 roads and 34 school systems, and tragically took the lives of 28 North Carolinians.

Immediately in the aftermath, North Carolina's Congressional delegation began working with your office, the relevant federal agencies, and colleagues on the Appropriations Committees to ensure that impacted North Carolinians received the federal assistance necessary to begin the rebuilding process.

On January 18, 2017, HUD announced \$198.5 million in CDBG-DR funding for North Carolina's recovery efforts. The CDBG-DR grant program supports a variety of disaster recovery activities including housing redevelopment and rebuilding, business assistance, economic revitalization, and infrastructure repair. On May 18, 2017 and August 1, 2017, HUD released \$6.1 million and \$31 million, respectively, in CDBG-DR funding to North Carolina. The State received its final allocation of \$168 million on April 11, 2018 as a result of the North Carolina delegation's continued work to include the funds in the fiscal year (FY) 2018 federal budget.

Our offices invested significant time and resources to assist those impacted by Hurricane Matthew. During and after the storm, we made every effort to support the agencies and nonprofits who came to North Carolina to assist our residents. Therefore, it is troubling to learn that these CDBG-DR funds are delayed in reaching those in most need of assistance. It is even more frustrating to learn that according to HUD, our state is not within the monthly spending pace required to fully use the assistance by the target closeout date of August 2023 and has been designated a "slow-spender." North Carolina has the potential to lose millions of dollars in disaster relief aid if it continues to allocate funds at this rate.

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This leads us to the following questions:

1. Is the state action plan, required by HUD to receive CDBG-DR dollars, finalized for the funds released on or prior to August 1, 2017, and is that \$236 million in CDBG-DR assistance available to the state of North Carolina? Have you submitted to HUD a state action plan for spending the additional \$168 million in CDBG-DR funds for approval?

2. How much of the available CDBG-DR funds have been spent to date? What is the timeline for getting the remaining CDBG-DR dollars to those in need?

3. What are the primary goals of your administration when spending the CDBG-DR funds? Have you determined if housing redevelopment and rebuilding, business assistance, economic revitalization, or infrastructure repair are the most pressing needs of our residents? Are these goals and priorities consistent with those made available to the public, as required?

4. What public awareness campaigns have been conducted by your office to bring

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awareness to these available funds to maximize education and understanding for our constituents who would be eligible for these CDBG-DR funds?

It is deeply concerning that these federal disaster dollars are not being released when many North Carolina families are still living in temporary housing provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We strongly urge your office in consultation with North Carolina Emergency Management to distribute funding quicker. Timely and efficient administration of these secured funds is critically important to families and businesses across North Carolina still recovering from Hurricane Matthew. Any further delay may also have unacceptable consequences on any future disaster aid requests.

The North Carolina Congressional delegation remains ready to work with your office to ensure the successful and complete recovery of our state and its resilient residents.

Sincerely,

Thom Tillis

Richard Burr

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Walter B. Jones

Virginia Foxx

Richard Hudson

David Rouzer

Robert Pittenger

George Holding