

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 27, 2019

Mr. Keith Turi  
Assistant Administrator  
Recovery Directorate  
Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20472-3635

**RE: Polk County School Board Hurricane Irma claims**

Dear Mr. Turi:

We write to express concern in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) delayed response to Hurricane Irma reimbursement appeals made by Polk County Public School District (District).

Over 150 District locations sustained direct hurricane damage and 89 were without power for an extended length of time. The District repeatedly asked for extensions to comply with the requests from FEMA, but all requests were denied. These extension denials were then followed by a general denial of 123 individual projects, amounting to at least \$145 million in requested funds. Secondly, your agency has not yet issued a ruling regarding District's appeal. The deadline for a response to the District's appeal was August 22, 2019. Furthermore, if your agency fails to issue a ruling by November 19, 2019, the District must request arbitration with the Civilian Contract Board of Appeals or continue to wait indefinitely for a ruling. Neither of these options are realistic for the District, as FEMA's website even warns of the substantial backlog of pending cases of arbitration. Lastly, FEMA has yet to issue an eligibility determination on 28 projects from the District, amounting to at least another \$35 million.

The majority of these claims were made in 2017 shortly after Hurricane Irma and while the funding for nine projects has already been obligated to the State of Florida. There are currently 123 projects under appeal with the FEMA Public Assistance Program, and 28 projects that have no eligibility determination. We request a status update of these, all the projects made by the District.

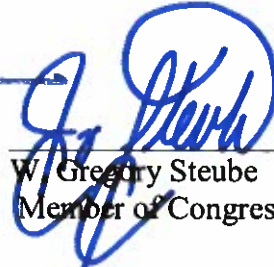
Sincerely,



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



Ross Spano  
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube  
Member of Congress