

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

March 30, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

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.

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.

- Guarantee Housing Choice Vouchers for all eligible Americans and convert the funding status from annual appropriations to mandatory spending.
- \$70 billion to address the Public Housing repair backlog.
- \$45 billion for the National Housing Trust Fund per year, 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. We respectfully encourage you to consider these three principal

recommendations as minimum housing investments that will help ensure the broader in the Build Back Better infrastructure package delivers broad and equitable benefits to all Americans.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

/s/ Ritchie Torres  
United States Representative

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

/s/ Stephen Lynch  
United States Representative

/s/ Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

/s/ Adam Smith  
United States Representative

/s/ Ed Markey  
United States Senator

/s/ Lucy McBath  
United States Representative

/s/ Alex Padilla  
United States Senator

/s/ Suzanne Bonamici  
United States Representative

/s/ Patty Murray  
United States Senator

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

/s/ Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

/s/ Rashida Tlaib  
United States Representative

/s/ Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

/s/ Jerrold Nadler  
United States Representative

/s/ Mazie Hirono  
United States Senator

/s/ Earl Blumenauer  
United States Representative

/s/ Ted W. Lieu  
United States Representative

/s/ Dina Titus  
United States Representative

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/s/ Gwen Moore  
United States Representative

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

/s/ Mondaire Jones  
United States Representative

/s/ Barbara Lee  
United States Representative

/s/ Carolyn B. Maloney  
United States Representative

/s/ Adam B. Schiff  
United States Representative

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez  
United States Representative

/s/ Ro Khanna  
United States Representative

/s/ Joe Neguse  
United States Representative

/s/ Joaquin Castro  
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  
United States Representative

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

/s/ Adriano Espaillat  
United States Representative

/s/ Judy Chu  
United States Representative

/s/ Bonnie Watson Coleman  
United States Representative

/s/ Nikema Williams  
United States Representative

/s/ Bobby L. Rush  
United States Representative

/s/ André Carson  
United States Representative

/s/ Yvette D. Clarke  
United States Representative

/s/ Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
United States Representative

/s/ Mary Gay Scanlon  
United States Representative

/s/ Grace Meng  
United States Representative

/s/ Jimmy Panetta  
United States Representative

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

/s/ Mike Levin  
United States Representative

/s/ Cori Bush  
United States Representative

/s/ Jan Schakowsky  
United States Representative

/s/ Steve Cohen  
United States Representative

/s/ Kathleen M. Rice  
United States Representative

/s/ Lucille Roybal-Allard  
United States Representative

/s/ Daniel T. Kildee  
United States Representative

/s/ Mark DeSaulnier  
United States Representative

/s/ Stacey E. Plaskett  
United States Representative

/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
United States Representative

Cc: Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi