

United States Senate

January 22, 2021

Mr. Bob Fenton
Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator
Office of the Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20024

Ms. MaryAnn Tierney
Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Deputy Administrator
Office of the Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Mr. Fenton and Ms. Tierney:

During my time as Governor of Florida, our state faced a number of disasters and was severely impacted by several massive and deadly hurricanes. It is through these unfortunate events that I developed a strong working relationship with the hardworking men and women of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The work of FEMA is often thankless and I want to express my gratitude for your agency's dedication to keeping Americans safe and prepared before, during and after natural disasters.

The work of FEMA is critical to our nation in times of crisis and I believe it is incredibly important that we ensure nothing is done to diminish the ability of your team to quickly respond when your support is needed. Unfortunately, I fear that just such an action is being planned. I write today out of concern following reports that President Biden is working with Senator Schumer to give New York City and the State of New York \$2 billion in additional FEMA emergency funding. They claim this funding is to address fallout from the coronavirus, when in fact it would be used to address budget shortfalls caused by decades of fiscal mismanagement by the city and state. I know this because Senator Schumer openly bragged about the funding being used to address state and local budget woes in his press release announcing this political bailout deal.

This move by President Biden means that he plans to vastly expand the allowable uses of the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) and other FEMA funds, which provide critical aid following

Mr. Fenton and Ms. Tierney
January 22, 2021
Page Two

hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and other natural disasters, to irresponsibly bailout wasteful, liberal state and local governments. The Biden-Schumer plan to circumvent Congress and issue a bailout to New York is irresponsible and unfair to states like Florida, where we made the tough choices to put our state in a fiscally responsible position. To protect taxpayer dollars and ensure we have adequate funding in the event of a natural disaster, I write to ask:

- How would FEMA pay for this \$2 billion in emergency funding to New York and New York City? Would the funding derive entirely from the DRF?
- To what extent will this expanded funding be available to states other than New York?
- How would the Biden-Schumer plan impact DRF reserves, which are used to prepare for and recover from natural disasters?
- Taking into account this increased spending from the DRF, when are the Fund's reserves projected to be depleted?
- What accountability measures, if any, would FEMA attach to the spending? Does FEMA have the ability to ensure this money is spent only on coronavirus response, not to backfill budgets after decades of mismanagement?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We absolutely cannot allow our nation to be unprepared for a natural disaster because politicians in Washington want to bailout their friends. I look forward to continuing to work with you to make sure taxpayer dollars are protected and not wasted to unfairly pay for the irresponsible financial decisions of states that have shown time and time again to be poor stewards of taxpayer money.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
United States Senator

cc: Mr. Joseph V. Cuffari, Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security