

June 1, 2020

To the:

(in alphabetical order by state and then city or county)

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the State of California

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the State of Connecticut

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the State of Iowa

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the State of Louisiana

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the City of New Orleans, Louisiana

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the State of New Jersey

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the State of New York

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the City of New York

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the City of Minot, North Dakota

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the State of Tennessee

U.S. Congressional Delegation of Shelby County, Tennessee

U.S. Congressional Delegation of the Commonwealth of Virginia

We, the undersigned state, county and municipal grantees of the federal Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) and National Disaster Resilience (CDBG-NDR) programs, write to request that Congress extend the deadline set in P.L.113-2 for the expenditure of funds allocated to these programs. Although we are spread throughout the country and our projects cover everything from flood control to tornado preparedness to wildfire prevention, we collectively recognize that the current pandemic may disrupt our programs and cost our constituents much-needed disaster assistance. **We therefore request the final expenditure deadline be extended to September 30, 2025 to ensure adequate time for project construction and grant closeout.**

We ask for your help because Congress set the deadline in the appropriations language that the granting agency, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), cannot waive. The availability of funds for obligation and expenditure is created by Congress, and only an act of Congress can extend the availability of previously appropriated funds. Granting an extension will ensure these funds remain available to complete the projects already underway, creating jobs and economic development opportunities in communities hard hit by natural disasters and now by COVID-19.

Without an extension, any funds not spent by the deadline will be canceled and projects will remain unfinished. In its appropriation language for P.L.113-2, Congress stipulated that funding allocated to HUD could only remain available until September 30, 2017. The procedure for appropriations accounts in 31 USC 1552 (a)¹ sets a final expenditure deadline of funds made available by Congress of five years from the appropriation date or in the case of P.L.113-2, September 30, 2022. We are requesting an extension now because of the anticipated impacts of COVID-19 on supply chains and labor contracts. These disruptions will further complicate the long lead times associated with implementing the large-scale infrastructure projects funded under this appropriation.

The CBDG-DR and CBDG-NDR grants fund infrastructure projects that deliver good-paying construction jobs for Americans, jobs that are needed all the more now as we recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19. Granting an extension at this time, as part of those measures, ensures communities throughout our country continue to receive the support they need to weather this storm and the next.

Sincerely,

(in alphabetical order by state name and then city or county)

The California Department of Housing and Community Development
State of Connecticut, Department of Housing
State of Iowa, Iowa Economic Development Authority
State of Louisiana Office of Community Development
City of New Orleans, Louisiana
The City of Springfield, Massachusetts
State of New Jersey, Department of Community Affairs
New York State Homes & Community Renewal
City of New York, NY, Mayor's Office of Resiliency
City of Minot, North Dakota, Disaster Recovery Grant Program Manager & Chief Resilience Officer
Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development
Shelby County Tennessee, Office of the Mayor
Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

¹ 31 USC 1552 (a) On September 30th of the 5th fiscal year after the period of availability for obligation of a fixed appropriation account ends, the account shall be closed and any remaining balance (whether obligated or unobligated) in the account shall be canceled and thereafter shall not be available for obligation or expenditure for any purpose.