



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

March 3, 2016

Mr. Patrick Talbott, Planning and Evaluation
Department of Housing and Community Development
Division of Financial Assistance
P.O. Box 952054
Sacramento, CA 94252-2054

RE: Proposed Rulemaking for the Community Development Block Grant Program

Dear Mr. Talbott:

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Proposed Rulemaking for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. RCRC is an association of thirty-five rural California counties and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of an elected supervisor from each of those member counties. Our member counties are recipients of CDBG Program funds which have provided vital housing programs, critical public infrastructure, community public facilities, public services, economic development, and planning activities over the years.

RCRC is very supportive of the proposed changes that will allow the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to administer supplemental funds awards in the event of a special appropriation of emergency supplemental assistance or from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) including special allocation of disaster or emergency funding. This funding would be made available for those communities involved in either a presidential declaration of disaster or a gubernatorial proclamation of a state or local emergency.

We also support and appreciate the proposed changes to make it easier for grantees with existing state CDBG contracts to amend those contracts and provide assistance to disaster impacted communities.

Over the past several years, our member counties have experienced increasingly damaging wildfires due to forest management practices, the drought, tree mortality, and climate change. It culminated this past year in the devastating Valley and Butte fires in Lake and Calaveras counties, destroying over 1,800 homes, multifamily structures,

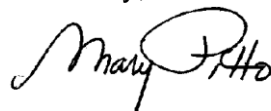
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commercial buildings, and many other structures. In addition, these fires have caused damage to public infrastructure and compromised the public's health, safety, and welfare in a myriad of ways. Unfortunately, in light of the conditions of our forests, more of these destructive fires are expected in our future.

While the disaster funding could be beneficial to communities in our most recent fires, it will be applicable in the future for other types of disasters the State experiences, such as flooding and earthquakes. RCRC believes the proposed changes will improve the efficiency and effectiveness for the State CDGB program in disaster ravaged areas. We commend HCD for the responsiveness and foresight in proposing these changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Pitto". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "P" and "T".

MARY PITTO
Regulatory Affairs Advocate