

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 16, 2019

Mr. Peter T. Gaynor  
Acting Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Acting Administrator Gaynor,

We write to express our deep concern that localities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in New Mexico may not be adequately reimbursed by the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) Southern Border Humanitarian Assistance program for costs incurred providing humanitarian relief to asylum seekers who arrived at the southern border, many of whom were fleeing terror and violence in their home nations.

We respectfully request that you direct the EFSP National Board to take the following four actions: First, we request an immediate extension for submitting an application for reimbursements for eligible services provided. It is our understanding that new guidance for administrative expenses were not provided to applicants until the morning of September 13<sup>th</sup>. Second, work with New Mexico local boards, state set-aside committees, eligible nonprofits, faith-based, and government (state and local) entities before awards are dispersed to ensure that eligible expenditures reflect all costs incurred. Third, we ask that the National Board work with eligible applicants to ensure that reporting requirements are not overly burdensome and preventing applicants from applying. Fourth, we ask that all applicants from New Mexico receive full reimbursements for eligible expenses.

It is clear that the federal government's policies have put a strain on local resources by contributing to the humanitarian crisis that existed along the border. This caused New Mexico and its communities to face new and unbudgeted costs caring for asylum-seeking migrants, as federal agencies did not provide for their sufficient shelter and humanitarian needs.

We are discouraged by FEMA's roll out of the EFSP Southern Border Humanitarian Assistance program, and FEMA's lack of communication and coordination with Congress and applicants in New Mexico when developing the guidance and assistance for the application process. Many New Mexican applicants have found the application process overly burdensome and the

documentation requirements inflexible, with no accounting for the realities of providing emergency humanitarian aid.

Given the impact of the humanitarian needs on our southern border, and the strain on state, local, and NGO resources, we believe it is critical that FEMA work to ensure that border communities and NGOs are properly compensated for administering emergency aid, which is more appropriately the responsibility of federal agencies.

New Mexicans stepped up to protect vulnerable children and families—treating them with the care, respect, and decency that is emblematic of our state and we urge that they be fairly reimbursed.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and we stand ready to work with you on this issue.

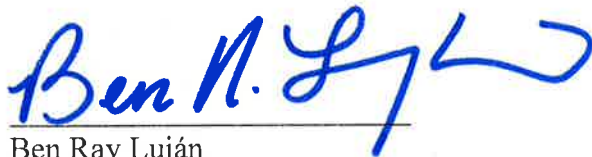
Sincerely,



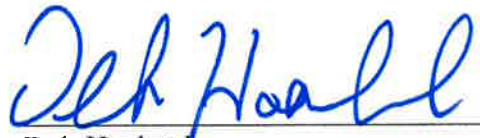
Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Ben Ray Luján  
United States Representative



Deb Haaland  
United States Representative



Xochitl Torres Small  
United States Representative