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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

June 11, 2013

Mr. W. Craig Fugate
Department Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington DC, 20472

Dear Mr. Fugate:

Thank you for the meeting in my office last week. I appreciate our up-front conversation about many of the issues still facing New Jersey and our communities as we continue Superstorm Sandy recovery efforts.

Your commitment to provide appropriate Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staff to help the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association review the recent denial and evaluate whether this Region II decision should be appealed is most appreciated. While there may be other sources of funding available, representatives of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association are rightly concerned about precedents that may be set for future FEMA aid along with other federal agency funding, especially since federal agencies including FEMA have provided assistance to Ocean Grove in the past. As you can imagine the decision to move forward with an appeal is an extremely crucial one for representatives of the Association. As you mentioned, we need the best answer on this question.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate the public safety and emergency response needs that are inherent in providing timely restoration of the Ocean Grove boardwalk. Letters from numerous public safety providers, including the New Jersey State Attorney General, the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office, and several communities neighboring Ocean Grove point out that restoration of this boardwalk is crucial to essential emergency services. In fact, these public safety leaders argue that the boardwalk was not only a safe public pedestrian thoroughfare but also infrastructure that functioned as a critical route for ambulances and other emergency vehicles. Of course, all these issues become increasingly significant and vital now that summer is upon us and there are more beachgoers and other people present and active in the area.

With regard to the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act (HR 592), I appreciate your candidness and current neutrality on this matter as FEMA reviews this bill which was approved in the House of Representatives on February 13, 2013, by a vote of 354-72. Your consideration of my bill is much appreciated. I look forward to working with you on any legislative modifications you might suggest to enable the enactment this legislation. As you

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know, HR 592 is designed to provide equitable treatment of all private non-profit facilities decimated by national disasters. Restoring the facilities and programs of these organizations represents a critical aspect of real community recovery in areas affected by these adversities.

Finally, it was certainly good news to hear that we soon will be moving to a 90-10 federal share for FEMA funding. This new cost share will be extremely helpful for local governments in New Jersey which are dealing with the after effects of Sandy while wrestling with their budgets. A 90-10 federal local split will make difficult financial planning decisions a little easier.

Again, thank you for last week's meeting in my office and your promise to keep in touch on matters related to the devastation caused by Superstorm Sandy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Smith", written over the word "Sincerely,".

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress