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October 21, 2024

The Honorable Adrienne Todman
Acting Secretary
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Acting Secretary Todman,

I am writing to express serious concerns with ongoing reports of poor living conditions in several properties under the management of the Atlantic City Housing Authority (ACHA), where some of my most vulnerable constituents are housed. In doing so, I join several other members of the New Jersey Congressional delegation who have written to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) over the past year with similar concerns. I appreciate our recent conversation about the various problems plaguing ACHA's properties in New Jersey, and urge you to utilize all available HUD tools and resources to help ensure the safety and well-being of the New Jerseyans who live there.

For the past several years, residents in various properties managed by the ACHA have reported widespread instances of unsafe and unsanitary conditions, including mold, pests, gas leaks, issues with heat and hot water, broken appliances, defective smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and more. As we approach winter, such issues could constitute a matter of life and death. Moreover, residents have previously been asked on multiple occasions to relocate on unacceptably short notice to hotels without access to cooking devices or accommodations for pets, inflicting further hardship.

The ACHA has failed to rectify these persistent issues, in part because of its well-documented management problems, including deficiencies with its procurement and contracting procedures, record keeping, financial management, and resident relations. One HUD official called an audit of the ACHA "one of the worst audits that I've ever read in my life," and referred to the conditions as "a complete and total failure of government."¹

I understand that HUD has entered into a Recovery Action Plan with the ACHA to address these issues. The vast majority of this plan deals with rectifying the ACHA's many administrative deficiencies. These are surely critical issues to address in the long term, but I want to be sure that proper emphasis is placed on swiftly addressing the unsafe, potentially life-threatening physical

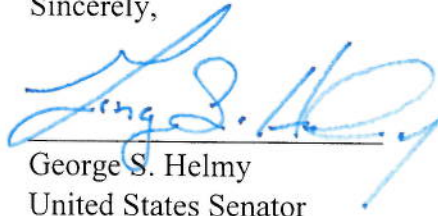
¹ Alison Burdo, *HUD Officials slam Atlantic City Housing Authority, plan visit*, The Press of Atlantic City (Nov. 8, 2023), https://pressofatlanticcity.com/news/local/hud-atlantic-city-housing-authority/article_15e1f0ea4-7db1-11ee-81bc-63b96993e4ce.html

condition of the properties. In the nine months since the ACHA agreed to the Recovery Action Plan, they do not appear to have made substantial progress on these critical issues that implicate the immediate safety of the residents living in ACHA properties, with some units still lacking heat as of last week.

With winter fast approaching, these substandard living conditions in ACHA properties have become more urgent to address than ever. I appreciate the work HUD has been doing on this front, and I ask that you continue to emphasize resident safety through rapid remediation of the most critical physical deficiencies with these homes. I further ask that you increase direct communication between HUD officials and affected residents. This will not only ensure pressing issues are being identified and addressed, but it will also reassure residents that have understandably lost some faith in the ACHA's willingness and ability to solve these problems.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



George S. Helmy
United States Senator