



FEMA

26 April 2006

Mr. John E. Walsh, Jr.
Deputy Chief of Staff for Neighborhoods and Housing
Office of the Mayor
City of Houston
10565 Katy Freeway
4th Floor
Houston, TX 77024

Dear Mr. Walsh:

This letter is in response to the City of Houston's request on April 22, 2006 for an extension of time for terminating the Houston Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) Contracts.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursed the City's Public Assistance Program for emergency shelter provided to Hurricane Katrina and Rita evacuees via the HAP Contracts. The City requested a time extension pursuant to Section VI.A.2.b. of the FEMA Recovery Disaster-Specific Guidance – Conversion of Assistance-403 to 408 (DSG-Conversion). We approve the time extension for the City of Houston to terminate the HAP Contracts as stated below.

Based on our follow-up conversation since receiving your letter, we understand that the City does not seek this extension as to apartment units leased by *eligible evacuees* identified to date. It is our expectation that the conversion of *eligible evacuees* to housing assistance under FEMA's Individuals and Households Assistance Program (Section 408) will proceed according to the DSG-Conversion. This includes appropriate notice from the City to the landlords and evacuees on or before April 30, 2006. FEMA provided suggested content for notices (templates) on April 19. We expect HAP Contracts for those Section 408-eligible apartment units identified to date to be terminated by May 31, 2006.

When we met with the Mayor and his staff on April 18, the Mayor expressed concern regarding the process by which FEMA determines an evacuee's eligibility under Section 408. The Mayor indicated that he wants FEMA to exercise due diligence in making its eligibility determinations, although he recognized that some errors are inevitable. On

April 21, we shared with you our process for reviewing eligibility for assistance under Section 408.

At the April 18 meeting, we agreed with your request to revisit our determinations of evacuees ineligible for Section 408 assistance. As an update, we anticipate completing this review by April 28 and will provide the updated eligibility determinations as soon as possible. We assure you that the determinations are accurate and based upon information provided by the evacuees, who were contacted personally when additional information was required. Therefore, these lists should be accepted by you for action under DSG-Conversion.

The extension of time applies to the lists of ineligible evacuees FEMA will provide to the City by May 15, 2006. It also applies to the May 30, 2006 date by which the City must notify landlords and evacuees of the end of emergency shelter assistance. The HAP Contracts for each ineligible evacuee will terminate on **June 30, 2006**.

There is a group of 492 households (or apartment units) for whom the City needs to provide additional information. Based on previously provided categorical designations, they fall in the category "Correct Information Needed." Currently, FEMA has no record of these individuals. Accordingly, this group will be designated ineligible for Section 408 assistance and a list provided to the City under separate cover.

Lastly, we committed to continue Section 403 assistance for evacuees that have not been determined eligible or ineligible. As FEMA provides the City with additional eligibility determinations, the City will be required to proceed with the conversion in accordance with the DSG-Conversion.

Sincerely,



E.C. "Butch" Smith
Director
Austin Transitional Recovery Office

cc: Frank Cantu, Jr.
State Coordinating Officer
TX DPS Emergency Management