Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2021

The Honorable David Price
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

As the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (T-HUD) develops its Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 appropriations bill, we respectfully urge you modify language from prior T-HUD appropriations bills that prevents public housing agencies from over-leasing.

As communities around the country continue to cope with the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, public housing agencies (PHAs) need every tool at their disposal to prevent homelessness and promote affordable housing. While recently passed COVID-19 relief bills have provided some housing assistance, this subcommittee can allow PHAs to put reserve funds to use as an accommodation that uses existing funds at PHAs for the first year in order to issue additional Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs). We therefore urge you to modify the following language:

> *"Provided further, That funds provided under this paragraph in this Act and in previous Acts may be used to fund a total number of unit months under lease that exceeds a public housing agency's authorized level of units under contract, except for public housing agencies participating in the Moving to Work (in this title "MTW") demonstration, which shall instead be governed by the terms and conditions of their MTW agreements."*

Modifying this proviso would permit housing authorities across the country to issue Section 8 HCVs above what is permitted in their Annual Contributions Contracts (ACC). HCVs help low-income individuals and families find affordable housing in the private housing market by reimbursing the landlord for the difference between what a household can afford to pay in rent and the rent itself. Language from recent T-HUD appropriations bills caps the number of HCVs that housing authorities can issue on an annual basis even if an authority has excess federal funds for Housing Assistance Payments. As a result, some housing authorities have significant reserves that they cannot use at a time when there is a sudden, extreme need for housing assistance.

In New York City, Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is one of three agencies in the that administers HCVs. Under its ACC, HPD is permitted to issue 37,693 vouchers. Modifying this proviso would permit HPD to issue hundreds of additional HCVs without exhausting these

reserves. Other PHAs around the nation would similarly be able to make more vouchers available for the coming fiscal year in order to meet this sudden, short-term need.

In order to ensure as many Americans as possible can remain in affordable, quality housing as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to include language that permits housing authorities to issue HCVs above their current cap with funds that they currently have available in reserve. We thank you for your attention to this important request and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress