

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 7, 2009

The Honorable Craig Fugate
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW, Room 700
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Fugate:

As we write to you, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in coordination with other Federal and State agencies, are conducting a comprehensive investigation into the health and safety impacts of Chinese-made drywall on American consumers. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has an important role in disaster response and recovery efforts – helping residents impacted by manmade and natural disasters. We believe that, at the appropriate time, your agency may be of assistance to homeowners impacted by this toxic product.

Since 2006, more than 550 million pounds of drywall have been imported to the United States from China. In the last 20 months, countless homeowners across the country have reported serious metal corrosion, noxious fumes and health concerns. Reported symptoms have included bloody noses, headaches, insomnia and skin irritation. Preliminary testing has confirmed that imported defective drywall is the problem, but these tests have not been able to pinpoint the specific problem substance within the drywall. More comprehensive results are expected from CPSC and EPA in late October. As of September 2009, the CPSC has received 1,311 incident reports from 26 states and the District of Columbia, demonstrating that this poses a threat to homeowners across the country.

It is also our understanding that FEMA has played a role in assisting individuals and communities confronted with similar chemical-related health impacts in the past. For example, following an emergency declaration in 1980, FEMA assisted with the temporary relocation of families affected by the toxic waste deposits in the Love Canal neighborhood of Niagara Falls, New York. In 1983, FEMA also assisted with the relocation of residents of Times Beach, Missouri, after the area had been contaminated with dioxin. For this incident, funds were transferred from EPA's Superfund Trust Fund to FEMA for permanent relocation of affected residents.

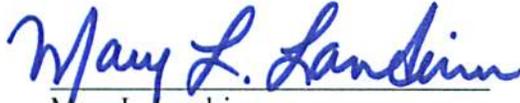
With this in mind, we respectfully request that FEMA review its existing authority under the Stafford Act and respond no later than November 7, 2009 on the following:

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- Whether FEMA – following a written request from a Governor who has declared a disaster or emergency – may offer rental assistance, if homes, businesses or a combination of the two, have sustained uninsured losses.

In closing, families in our states are, in many cases, watching their dream homes turn into nightmares. As the Federal government determines the full size and scope of this disaster, we believe it is important to marshal all appropriate Federal resources that may assist these families. We therefore thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



Jim Webb
United States Senator



Mark Warner
United States Senator



Bill Nelson
United States Senator