Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

October 5, 2024

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of
Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

Secretary Becerra and Administrator Criswell,

We write today to formally request the operationalization of the Greensboro Children's Center (GCC), formerly the American Hebrew Academy, for the purpose of assisting in the response and recovery efforts to Hurricane Helene.

As you may know, Health and Human Services (HHS) currently operates GCC as an Influx Care Facility (ICF) meant to house and support unaccompanied alien children (UAC) in the case of an emergency. However, in June 2024, HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) at the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) announced that GCC has "ramped down its operations to facility upkeep." As of this writing, we understand the facility remains "ramped down."

Based on our understanding of this facility, we think that it could be incredibly useful in supporting the people of western North Carolina as the region recovers from Hurricane Helene. To the best of our knowledge, GCC has hundreds of beds, as well as extensive facilities for medical care, meals, and education. We believe that this ICF could be repurposed to support the state's rescue and recovery efforts. For example, GCC could be used to temporarily house those displaced by the storm or to serve as a staging area for aid workers stationed in the state. Our offices welcome a discussion on how this facility could best be used to assist western North Carolina.

Hurricane Helene's impact on our state has been devastating. As we write this, thousands of people across western North Carolina have been displaced, lost their homes, or are without basic services such as water or electricity because of the storm. With all that is happening in the state right now, we do not believe it makes practical or moral sense to leave a functional, "ready to go" facility like GCC idle and out of operation.

We understand that there may be logistical and/or bureaucratic hurdles to making this work. However, we urge you to do everything in your power to activate GCC in this capacity and to inform us on how we can best assist in getting this done.

Our delegation is grateful for the work that has been done by your agencies so far to assist the people of North Carolina. However, much more can and should be done to expediently aid those whose lives have been upended by this storm. We believe operationalizing GCC for the purposes of aid and recovery is an effective way to do so.

We appreciate your swift consideration of this urgent request. We and our teams are standing by, and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Richard Hudson
United States Representative

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Ted Budd
United States Senator

Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
United States Representative

Dan Bishop
United States Representative

Patrick McHenry
United States Representative

David Rouzer
United States Representative

Virginia Foxx
United States Representative

Chuck Edwards
United States Representative