

Oct. 11, 2009

Dear CHAT Members,

1. New HMGP Rules

Last week I wrote to Paul Rainwater, Exec. Dir. of LRA, to ask for any new rules for the HMGP Elevation Grants. He had one of his staff promptly send them to me and post them at the DRU (not the Road Home!) website.

You can see them here:

<http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/cdbg/dr/hmgrp/hmgrp.htm>

or send questions or requests for rules to hazardmitigation@la.gov

or call

1-877-744-7235

After receiving the new HMGP rules, I wrote to Mr. Rainwater the following:

Thank you very much for still trying to get the waiver for the >110% sized homes.

I am concerned about the ill-defined statement, which I had not seen until today, in these new guidelines about

"Also, regardless of the sources or amounts of funding a Applicant receives, OCD, GOHSEP and FEMA review each project for cost reasonableness."

This is consistent with an arbitrary-sounding denial of HMGP money to a CHAT applicant whose elevation was quite expensive and who already elevated.

Cost reasonableness should be defined or there will be inconsistent and unfair treatment of elevation grant applicants, as we are starting to hear.

Looking forward to some clarification to prevent broken promises about HMGP elevation award amounts,

Melanie

I have received no response and so it seems that these rules, which were posted only after I made an inquiry about rules last week, are meant to be ill defined, just as so many RH rules are.

While Mr. Rainwater is trying to get FEMA to reverse its rule about increased house size disqualifying applicants for HMGP grants, which is good, it is discouraging to read in a letter from FEMA to him that LRA did not spend any of \$100,000 for publicizing HMGP rules which FEMA gave to LRA in early 2008. It sounds just like what CHAT worked on so much with OCD (and Mike Spletto, in charge of housing in the Blanco administration) not wanting to allow posting RH rules at the RH website for a long time. Now we see this lack of transparency about the spending of tax dollars in the Jindal administration.

2. Project on Government Oversight (POGO)

**Please write one or two (or more if you like) paragraphs about Road Home or Elevation Grants.
Your post can be anonymous.**

The nationally known non-profit organization, Project On Government Oversight (POGO) in D.C. wrote to the HUD Inspector General and key Senators and Representatives for CHAT about the “surplus” RH money and the HUD investigation of our 39-page.

Please post at the POGO blog at:

<http://pogoblog.typepad.com/pogo/2009/09/the-far-too-long-and-winding-road-home-program.html>

Your post will show up right away because it is moderated to keep out junk and someone has to read it first.

If you have any problems or want your post to be anonymous,

please contact or send your post to Brian at brahija@pogo.org

Thank you!

Melanie Ehrlich
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