

TAXPAYERS PROTECTION ALLIANCE

December 1, 2022

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the Taxpayers Protection Alliance (TPA), and millions of taxpayers we represent, I write to express our views regarding oversight of previously approved funding and its potential as an offset in upcoming legislation related to government funding. As you begin to draft and consider legislation, it is essential to balance fiscal responsibility and federal natural disaster recovery assistance.

It is not uncommon for the federal government to assist in the repair of infrastructure, government buildings and other core services affected by natural disasters. It is also reasonable to expect that federal funds would be made available to individuals and businesses who have been adversely affected through property damage.

TPA recognizes the vital role the federal government plays in assisting devastated communities in their time of need. However, we would request that a sizable portion of this new spending be offset through other budgetary reductions. We also request that proper resources are allocated to the respective Offices of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office to ensure there is dutiful oversight conducted on the billions of taxpayer dollars in new spending.

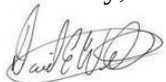
One area ripe for offset proposals that deserves further attention is unused disaster funding from areas that are no longer facing immediate need and where allocated funds haven't been spent. For example, in 2017, the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) received billions of dollars in disaster relief for Hurricane Irma, much of which remains unused. According to the Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery, they have nearly \$4.4 billion in unexpended federal funding.¹ There is no longer an emergency in the USVI, and it is important that the federal government shift resources to areas that are in most need.

The USVI has also shown a propensity for wasting much of this funding, including \$75 million for four incorrectly purchased generators, millions of dollars for solar energy, and millions of dollars in wasted housing spending. TPA is concerned that the rest of this money will also be squandered, especially as there is an immediate and desperate need for it in Southwest Florida.

It is essential that lawmakers maximize each dollar spent at the federal level and that means shifting disaster relief more nimbly to the most pertinent emergencies. Congress has a responsibility to both practice fiscal prudence and also ensure effective oversight of funds. As has happened in other disasters, the continued approach by Congress to simply spend without accountability is a significant, yet entirely avoidable, shortcoming with national budgetary implications.

We urge you consider using existing, unused disaster relief for offsets as these important government funding packages develop.

Sincerely,



David Williams
President

¹ https://www.usviodr.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ODR-All-Funds-Report_July2022-002.pdf