



**One Hundred Eleventh Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20515**

January 15, 2010

W. Craig Fugate  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Fugate:

On January 12, 2010, the Republic of Haiti was devastated by a magnitude 7.0 earthquake. While the search and rescue efforts are on-going, media reports have estimated that as many as 50,000 Haitians may have lost their lives and hundreds of thousands have been left homeless.

It has been brought to my attention that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is investigating the idea of transferring Temporary Housing Units (THU's) used in the United States during the 2005 Hurricane Season to the Republic of Haiti. I am concerned about the utilization of these housing units in the relief efforts in Haiti.

As you know, I have expressed great concern for the safety of these units due to the presence of formaldehyde. While I continue to believe that these units should not be used for human habitation, I do believe that they could be of some benefit on a short-term, limited basis if the appropriate safeguards are provided. For instance, with the shortage of housing and an outpouring of international relief workers, such as medical teams and search and rescue teams, these units may be appropriate for use as short term shelter or emergency treatment clinics for non-life threatening injuries. I believe that this type of temporary and limited use may be a suitable and appropriate application for these THU's and be of great benefit to the rescue and recovery mission in Haiti.

However, given the potential for adverse health affects when used as more than short-term shelter, I would be gravely concerned about distributing these units to the people of Haiti for use as housing. This country's immediate response to help in this humanitarian crisis should not be blemished by later concerns over adverse health consequences precipitated by our efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns in reaching a decision on this issue. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Cherri Branson, Chief Oversight Counsel, Committee on Homeland Security at (202) 226-2616.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bennie G. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

Bennie G. Thompson  
Chairman