

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3215

October 2, 2025

The Honorable Scott Turner
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th St SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Turner:

I write to urgently call on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD or the Department) to assist the City of New York and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA or the Authority) in re-housing displaced tenants and restoring the residential building located at 205 Alexander Avenue, within the Mitchel Houses development in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx.

Early Wednesday morning, the building suffered a partial collapse following a gas explosion in the incinerator shaft, causing extensive property damage and prompting a major emergency response from the Fire Department of New York (FDNY), Con Edison, and NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM). While initial reports indicate no injuries, the incident has left residents deeply unsettled and has significantly compromised building safety.¹

This development, home to hundreds of families, requires immediate federal coordination to ensure all tenants are safely re-housed and that the structure is restored to livable condition as quickly as possible. Many families at Mitchel Houses rely on stable, affordable housing, and any delay in securing alternative accommodations could cause significant hardship during an already difficult time. Given HUD's critical role in supporting local housing authorities and safeguarding public housing infrastructure, I request that the Department provide the necessary funding, technical assistance, and resources to rehouse displaced tenants and fully rehabilitate affected public housing units.

As the federal agency charged with overseeing and funding the New York City Housing Authority, HUD bears a responsibility to ensure that federal dollars are used effectively to maintain safe, habitable, and structurally sound public housing.

¹ Tracy, Thomas. *Massive gas explosion causes partial collapse of Mott Haven Bronx NYCHA building*. NY Daily News. Retrieved from <https://www.nydailynews.com/2025/10/01/mott-haven-mitchel-houses-gas-explosion-causes-partial-collapse-bronx-nycha/>

For years, NYCHA has been severely underfunded, and decades of federal disinvestment have left the Authority with a staggering capital need of approximately \$80 billion for major repairs.² This chronic underfunding has forced NYCHA to defer essential repairs and has left properties across the city increasingly vulnerable to infrastructure failures like the one that occurred at Mitchel Houses.

While I recognize the challenges presented by the ongoing federal government shutdown, the Department must not allow this moment to delay urgent action or compromise the safety of New Yorkers. HUD's obligation to protect the residents of public housing, particularly those facing immediate hardship, cannot be postponed. The federal government must act swiftly to ensure families are safely re-housed and that necessary rehabilitation efforts proceed without delay.

The residents of Mitchel Houses deserve immediate action and the full support of federal and local partners. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your prompt response and to working with HUD to ensure the safety and well-being of Bronx families impacted by this tragic event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ritchie Torres", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress

² *NYCHA Fact Sheet 2024*. Retrieved from https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/NYCHA_Fact_Sheet.pdf