



January 3, 2013

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the more than 80,000 members of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), I am writing to urge the House to pass legislation to help communities recover from Hurricane Sandy and make the Northeast region more resilient to future natural disasters.

Today, hundreds of architects and their fellow design and construction professionals are working across the affected region to help their neighbors rebuild, even as they, too, confront the effects of the storm on their homes and businesses. However, they cannot do it alone. Federal support for the recovery process is vital to ensure that damaged communities are rebuilt in the most effective and responsible way.

As the House deliberates ways to provide support for the rebuilding effort, the AIA urges you to consider several key objectives:

- **Promote the redevelopment of affordable housing.** There is an adage that disasters do not cause new social and economic problems, but rather expose and magnify problems that were already there. Much of the Northeast region lacked affordable housing options before the storm and, tragically, many of the affordable neighborhoods that did exist were the hardest hit by Sandy. Existing programs such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and the New Markets Tax Credit should be leveraged to provide relief to people who need it most.
- **Rebuild critical infrastructure to higher standards.** Simply replacing what was lost will only sow the seeds of future disasters. Hurricane Sandy highlighted unnecessary vulnerabilities in the region's buildings and infrastructure. Congress must help resolve these issues by providing supplemental access to long-term capital through programs such as Community Development Block Grants, and a special allocation of private activity Hurricane Sandy Recovery Bonds. In an economic climate that remains difficult for the design and construction industry, providing better access to capital can enable the private sector to design communities to improve the quality of life of their citizens and be better prepared to face natural disasters in the future.

- **Preserve historic buildings that can be saved.** Repairing damaged historic buildings can benefit the recovery in several ways if they are repurposed rather than demolished and replaced. For the government, it can be less of a drain on economic and material resources. For the community, it can preserve familiar landmarks and cultural treasures. Enhancing the Rehabilitation Tax Credit in the disaster zone is a common-sense incentive to help achieve this goal.

Like all Americans, AIA members are committed to help the recovery process in any way they can. As designers of the communities we call home, we feel a special obligation to not only repair what was damaged, but to plan and design our communities to be built back better and stronger.

That is why the AIA urges the House to act without delay to provide communities affected by Hurricane Sandy the resources so desperately needed to recover, plan, design and rebuild.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mickey Jacob". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mickey Jacob, FAIA  
President