

Dear Citizens Involved in CHAT,

An 80-year-old woman with medical problems called so upset the other night about being “pressured to close” on her grant immediately even though the estimated cost of damage was wrong and the grant too low to keep her own roof over her head in her old age. She knows how difficult LRA has made it to get a fair appeal hearing and that after closing, it is much more difficult to win an appeal.

Please help us if you can possibly do what is described below.

It should take only about 5 min of your time.

The deadline for making comments has been extended to Saturday, Aug. 23 at CHAT’s request.

The LRA (state agency) is ignoring the requirement that they write-up a legal document (Action Plan Amendment) committing them to make appeals fairer according to the requirements of the law.

The law signed by the governor in July states:

“this Act shall become effective only if and when such Action Plan Amendment for implementing the provisions of R.S. 40:600.66(B) as provided in Section 1 of this Act is approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.”

<http://www.legis.state.la.us/billdata/streamdocument.asp?did=504663>

LRA is talking about its own ill-defined revision of appeals at the same time that so many applicants in great distress are contacting us.

LRA's version of reform does not include the commitment to help people who never had a fair appeal through no fault of their own.

In addition, please comment on the proposed using up of precious grant money on individual mitigation measures (up to \$7500) when FEMA money is available for that purpose.

Here’s the link to the new law that CHAT helped fight to get passed.
<http://www.legis.state.la.us/billdata/streamdocument.asp?did=504663>

Here's what we ask you to do:

1. Send your public comments to LRA in an email to ocd@la.gov

Short Sample letter (you can cut and paste all the lines in green or make your own):

Public Comments on LRA Amendments 27 and 28

LRA has to open up appeals to applicants who did not have a fair appeal as well as use the highest pre-storm value in an applicant's file when fixing shortchanging mistakes.

LRA needs to have appeals run by an independent agency under fair rules with guidelines for how appeals are decided.

LRA should not spend precious grant money on individual mitigation measures (\$7500 for shutters etc.).

Instead, LRA should use the FEMA Hazard Mitigation money for that.

Please give your name and city.

2. Then please paste your email in our new bulletin board so everyone can read it.

Do this by going to: <http://www.chatushome.com/blog/?p=8>

Scroll to the bottom of the page, under leave a reply.

Copy or type the same comments that you emailed to LRA.

This will make your comments available to the internet public via CHAT and will let CHAT have them to use as needed to plead the case of applicants who are being hurried up out of the program with shortchanged grants or no grants due to uncorrected "mistakes."

Thank you in advance,

Melanie Ehrlich
Co-Chairman, CHAT