



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

January 21, 2020

The Honorable Ben Carson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20410-0001

Dear Secretary Carson,

Thank you for your offer to provide resources to California to aid homeless people moving off the streets. We welcome the Administration's recent attention and focus on the national crisis of homelessness. I hope we can jointly develop a federal-state-local strategy to utilize the assets you have put on the table, in partnership with city and county governments around the state. I particularly thank Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti for his leadership in pushing for urgent solutions in this regard for the City of Los Angeles.

My Administration is implementing an urgent action plan, including an unprecedented investment of over \$2 billion in appropriated and planned funding for local homeless and housing solutions in just the last year alone. A key part of our emergency actions is deploying 100 emergency trailers and providing state land available for free to local governments to use for homeless housing and shelter. This is in addition to passage of reform legislation to allow for more expedited siting and construction of homeless housing and services.

Critically, all our emergency state actions include deep engagement with city and county partners. Before we announce any new deployment, we ensure that local leaders are on board and have committed the necessary human services and housing necessary to make these facilities work. Without this advanced planning, results prove temporary.



As you engage California with offers of resources, I hope you will match our commitment to comprehensive solutions that go beyond temporary tent villages. A successful deployment of emergency aid must include a significant federal commitment to housing resources – anything less, and we risk creating permanent homeless encampments on federal land. For example, the state is providing free excess land to local governments for the purpose of building affordable housing. You could match our commitment by similarly providing free surplus federal land to local governments across the state so they can build housing for the homeless.

Emergency shelter solves sleep and we agree this is an urgent priority. But only housing and services solve homelessness.

In California, we are showing how emergency resources like trailers and surplus land can be put to fast use in partnership with local governments as an interim step towards more housing. Just last week in Oakland, my Administration partnered with city and county governments to deploy 15 emergency trailers, along with medical and behavioral health services. We have demonstrated models that work.

I also take this opportunity to remind you of the two previous letters I sent to President Trump last year requesting 50,000 additional Housing Choice and HUD-VASH vouchers, paired with a reasonable fair market rent calculation. Housing investment is the only sustainable, scalable way to solve homelessness, and I hope you will show willingness to engage in a dialogue about this request soon. I remain available anytime to address these urgent matters.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom
Governor of California