

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Financial Services
Washington, DC 20515-6050

September 7, 2011

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In the immediate aftermath of the deadly April 27 tornadoes that struck my home state of Alabama, FEMA emergency funds were used to construct storm shelters to protect students of damaged or destroyed schools.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has now informed school administrators in a number of jurisdictions that FEMA regulations will require the demolition of storm shelters built with FEMA funds once repairs to the schools have been completed. The school officials have been told that FEMA funds were used for the construction of storm shelters during the period when portable classrooms were in use due to tornado damage to the permanent school facilities. According to FEMA, once the temporary classrooms are no longer required, the storm shelters will be demolished using additional FEMA funds.

Some comments by the school administrators involved include:

"This policy stinks."

"I laughed but it's really not funny."

"It's insane."

"To tear it down when it could be used by the community-- something's not right about that."

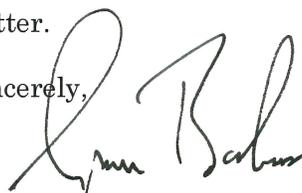
"It's not a wise use of taxpayers' dollars."

Apparently the FEMA policy is that the school systems may purchase the storm shelters from FEMA at "fair market rates," which is simply beyond the means of the schools in these already storm-ravaged areas. The alternative is that the shelters must be demolished using additional FEMA funds.

This policy is, by any objective standard, short-sighted and indefensible. It is yet another example of why the American people continue to lose confidence in the government and its ability to make choices in their best interest. Consequently, I intend to introduce legislation that will prohibit the demolition of these facilities. In the meantime, I respectfully request that you direct the FEMA Administrator to suspend any actions pursuant to this seriously misguided policy.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



SPENCER BACHUS
Chairman