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December 12, 2022

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Ms. Jean Salmonsens
Florida Housing Finance Corporation
227 N. Bronough St. Suite 5000
Tallahassee, FL 32301

RE: Public Comment for RFA 2022-206 HOME Financing

Ms. Salmonsens,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on RFA 2022-206 for HOME Financing. The publication of this RFA is timely and provides an outstanding opportunity to quickly address the housing needs in areas impacted by Hurricane Ian. Hurricane Ian had a significant impact on many Florida counties, and as recovery continues addressing the housing needs of the most vulnerable residents in each county is essential.

As you may know, Lee County was one of the most severely impacted areas, preliminary damage assessments completed by Lee County indicate that more than 5,000 residential structures were destroyed, and more than 13,500 residential structures had major damage. More than 190,000 Lee County residents have registered for assistance from FEMA, and more than 1,200 households have been approved for FEMA Direct Housing Assistance to date. With the significant impact to the housing stock, the construction of new housing units in Lee County is required to recover.

In 2022, Lee County's HOME allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development was only \$1,131,175. According to the 2019 study completed by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, the average cost for the development of a two-bedroom affordable housing unit in South Florida is approximately \$348,500. If Lee County were to dedicate all of the annual HOME entitlement allocation to the development of new units, this would only result in 3 two-bedroom units.

The housing need created by Hurricane Ian far surpasses what can be addressed by HUD entitlement funding that is allocated to the County. For this reason, Lee County is hereby requesting that Florida Housing Finance Corporation consider adding Lee County to the list of Counties eligible to participate in RFA 2022-206, and for Lee County be designated as a Tier 1 County eligible to use MMRB (local bonds) and 4% Housing Credits in conjunction with HOME funds. This designation

will allow developers the opportunity to finance much needed affordable housing development in Lee County.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments. Should you have any questions about the need in Lee County, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Desjarlais". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roger Desjarlais

County Manager, Lee County, FL