



May 14, 2025

Houston City Budget Workshop

Housing and Community Development Dept.

Good afternoon *again*, my name is Guadalupe, and I'm speaking on behalf of Bayou City Waterkeeper. I appreciate the department's significant investment in homelessness assistance, particularly rapid rehousing. Having served on the Houston-Harris County Housing Stability Task Force during the pandemic, I understand the critical need to support our most vulnerable community members – with the crucial caveat that these efforts **genuinely** provide resources and support for the community, rather than contributing to criminalizing and harm of the most vulnerable.

Furthermore, in my capacity with Bayou City Waterkeeper, I call for the **responsible** allocation of significant funding sources like **CDBG-DR24** and the core **CDBG program**. -

Given that a primary objective of these funds is disaster recovery and supporting resilient communities, we strongly advocate for prioritizing programs that address the fundamental needs of homeowners impacted by disasters and those facing housing instability. This necessitates robust investment in comprehensive home repair programs. This is looking at one of the many root causes of homelessness

As we've discussed, a critical and often overlooked aspect of home repair, particularly in the context of long-term recovery and preventing further hardship, is the issue of failing private sewer laterals, or PSLs. The financial burden of these essential repairs disproportionately affects vulnerable homeowners and can undermine the very goals of disaster recovery.

Therefore, we urge the department to dedicate a portion of the CDBG-DR24 and CDBG funds towards comprehensive home repair assistance, explicitly including the repair or replacement of private sewer laterals as eligible expenses. About a month ago, you heard us here advocate for a dedicated \$20-million fund for a program that provides assistance to low income residents for private sewer lateral repairs, leveraging these federal resources, would be a responsible and impactful use of disaster recovery funds.

By addressing these often-costly PSL repairs, we can ensure that recovery efforts truly reach those most in need and prevent further deterioration of housing conditions. This aligns directly with the intent of CDBG-DR and CDBG funding to foster resilient and healthy communities, particularly for low- and moderate-income residents. We believe that investing in these essential home repairs, including PSLs, is a proactive and responsible use of these funds, contributing to long-term stability and preventing future crises. We look forward to collaborating with the department on the effective and equitable allocation of these vital resources. ***You'll see us again in June when DR24 is discussed.***