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November 16, 2017

Hon. Andrew Cuomo  
Governor  
NYS Capital Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Eric T. Schneiderman  
Attorney General  
120 Broadway  
New York, NY 10271

Hon. Thomas P. DiNapoli  
State Comptroller  
59 Maiden Lane  
New York, NY 10038

Dear Governor Cuomo, Attorney General Schneiderman & Comptroller DiNapoli:

I write to urge your offices to appoint a joint monitor of the New York City Housing Authority and its management, in light of recent reports from the New York City Department of Investigation regarding the mismanagement of various tenant safety programs.

On Tuesday, the New York City Department of Investigation (NYCDOI) released a report which found that the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) failed to conduct required safety inspections for lead paint for years. Despite this, beginning in 2013 NYCHA submitted falsified documents to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) stating that they were in compliance with federal law that requires such inspections.

This is just the latest report from the NYCDOI indicating that NYCHA has failed to ensure tenant safety. The agency has also been criticized for its failure to provide working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, for failing to maintain elevator safety standards and for its failure to enforce its Permanent Exclusion policies for serious criminal offenders.

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My office agrees with the NYCDOJ's recommendation that a monitor must be appointed to investigate NYCHA's numerous violations and its disregard for the safety of its residents. However, such a monitor should not come from the City, given its compromised status as the current overseer of public housing in New York City. Additionally, a federal monitor would be a waste of time. The Trump Administration and the current HUD management have not indicated any support for public housing, nor have they exhibited competency in other areas. A federally-appointed monitor would likely be a disaster.

More than 400,000 individuals live in New York City's public housing developments, and they need your help. It is clear that the only way forward for public housing tenants at this juncture is State involvement.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly to discuss this matter at greater length.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruben Diaz Jr." with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ruben Diaz Jr.