

January 13, 2012

**HUD-Office of General Counsel**

**Robert H. Golden**

**Assistant General Counsel Ethics Law Division**

Sent via email: [Robert.H.Golden@hud.gov](mailto:Robert.H.Golden@hud.gov)

CC by email to:

David Stanowski, President of Galveston Open Government Project, [gogp@att.net](mailto:gogp@att.net)

Debbie Cenziper, Washington Post, [cenziperD@washpost.com](mailto:cenziperD@washpost.com)

Shaun Donovan, Secretary of HUD, [secretary.donovan@hud.gov](mailto:secretary.donovan@hud.gov)

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United States Office of Government Ethics, [contactOGE@oge.gov](mailto:contactOGE@oge.gov)

Dear Mr. Golden,

I am writing in support of the Galveston Open Government Project (GOGP) e mail sent to you yesterday, requesting a formal investigation into a potential conflict of interest between HUD Assistant Secretary Mercedes Marquez and McCormack Baron Salazar involving Galveston, TX.

By way of background:

75% of Galveston flooded on Sept. 13, 2008 during Hurricane Ike, including 569 units of public housing. According to Federal Executive Order 11988, public housing should not be rebuilt in a flood plain. However, low-income housing advocates Texas Appleaseed and Texas Low-Income Housing Service (TxLIHS) lodged a complaint against the State of Texas, resulting in a Conciliation Agreement between these housing advocates and the State. It required Galveston to rebuild all 569 public housing units. Galveston was not a party to this agreement.

Conditions in Galveston are this: floodplain, 23% poverty, 70% of children are on free or reduced lunch, crime rating of 650 which is highest in the county and double the national average, few job opportunities and a 20% decline in population since 2008. There is no way that rebuilding public housing in Galveston will satisfy AFFH regulations.

Add to that 7,000 vacant housing units, as confirmed by several independent surveys, including one done by HUD itself in 2009.

Despite all of that, The Galveston Housing Authority has enlisted McCormack Baron Salazar (MBS) to add to the glut of housing by building additional mixed-income units on top of the 569. Our mayor, Joe Jaworski, claims that Mercedes

Marquez called him and suggested that some sort of enforcement action could result to Galveston if MBS is not allowed to proceed with its plans.

<http://galvestondailynews.com/story/285118>

Ms. Marquez was a Vice President of McCormack Baron Salazar.

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/President-Obama-Announces-More-Key-Administration-Posts-4/17/2009](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/President-Obama-Announces-More-Key-Administration-Posts-4/17/2009)

I urge you, on behalf of all the good citizens of Galveston, to investigate this potential conflict of interest between Ms. Marquez and McCormack Baron Salazar.

Please note that, in addition to those copied on this email above, I am forwarding copies of this email to:

Congressman Ted Poe  
Texas District 2  
430 Cannon Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
Sent via fax to: 202-225-5547

Congressman Darrell Issa  
Chairman, Committee on Oversight & Government Reform  
California District 49  
2347 Rayburn House Office Building,  
District of Columbia 20515-0549  
Sent via fax to: 202-225-3303

Elijah E. Cummings  
Ranking Member, Committee on Oversight & Government Reform  
Maryland District 7  
2235 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C., 20515  
Sent via fax to: 202-225-3178

Congressman Blake Farenthold  
Member, Committee on Oversight & Government Reform  
Texas District 27  
2110 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Sent via fax to: 202-226-1134

Congressman Randy Neugebauer

**Chairman Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations  
Texas District 19  
1424 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Sent via fax to: 202-225-9615**

**Congressman Spencer Bachus  
Chairman Committee on Financial Services  
Alabama District 6  
2246 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Sent via fax to: 202-225-2082**

**Congresswoman Judy Biggert  
Chairwoman Subcommittee on Insurance, Housing, & Community Opportunity  
Illinois District 13  
2113 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Sent via fax to: 202-225-9420**

**Senator Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Finance  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Sent via fax to: 202-224-6020**

**Thank you for your attention to this matter.  
Respectfully,  
Julia Kamen  
Property owner, Galveston, TX**

**Current address:  
115 Cold Springs Dr.  
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512-943-9543**