

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

CC by email to:

David Stanowski, President of Galveston Open Government Project, gogp@att.net

Debbie Cenziper, Washington Post, cenziperD@washpost.com

Shaun Donovan, Secretary of HUD, secretary.donovan@hud.gov

Kathleen Pennington, HUD Office of Fair Housing, Assistant General Counsel-
Enforcement Division, kathleen.m.pennington@hud.gov

James A. Heist, HUD Assistant Inspector General, james.a.heist@hud.gov

United States Office of Government Ethics, 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

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.
Georgetown, TX 78633
512-943-9543**