

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 2, 2000

Alton H. Maddox, Jr.
16 Court Street
Suite 1901
Brooklyn, NY 11241

Dear Mr. Maddox:

I, too, am deeply concerned about the plight of the residents of Princeville.

I have been aware of Princeville for some time, due to its undeniable historic importance, and agree that the federal government should do all it can to assist the residents who have been displaced by this tragedy. Therefore I am pleased to report that the President has, by executive order, created an interagency council to develop recommendations for further actions to address the future of the town.

In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has assigned Hezekiah Stewart to work full time assisting the residents of Princeville. Hezekiah has experience in disaster recovery (he assisted in the recovery of College Station, Arkansas) and in this assignment, he reports directly to FEMA Director James Lee Witt. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has also set up a disaster recovery office specifically to aid residents of this region.

Currently, the Army Corps of Engineers is at work rebuilding and upgrading the levee that was breached during the hurricane. Residents of Princeville are not being forced to relocate. Rather, they have the option of applying for funds to repair their homes, for temporary housing, and for other forms of assistance. In January, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) made additional \$2.5 million available to rebuild 50 apartments.

While no amount of money can make up for the suffering experienced by the families who have lost their homes, I trust these funds are a good start. Of course, a long-term recovery strategy is needed. The interagency council will work closely with Mayor Perkins and others to create such a plan.

I will continue to monitor the situation and appreciate your raising it with me.

Sincerely,



Hillary Rodham Clinton

TO Melanne
Pl. advise R

TELEPHONE 718-834-9034
FAX 718-834-1275

ALTON H. MADDOX, JR.

16 COURT STREET, SUITE 1901
BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11241

January 17, 2000

Mrs. Hillary R. Clinton
First Lady of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Federal Aid for Princeville, NC

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

The federal government has a responsibility to rebuild Princeville, NC which was destroyed in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd. The causation for this devastation was not only this natural disaster but also an intentional opening of the spillgates at the Tar River Reservoir Dam near Rocky Mount, NC. The federal government has rebuilt many communities in the past simply and solely because the devastation was caused by a natural disaster. No justifiable reason exists on the part of the federal government to fail to freely rebuild Princeville.

Princeville should be a historical, federal landmark with the same appreciation as Plymouth Rock. It was established in 1865 near the end of the Civil War and under the protection of Union forces. In 1885, former enslaved Africans incorporated the town. Accordingly, Princeville is the first town in the United States to be incorporated by persons of African ancestry. This is a significant achievement and the town has struggled from its inception to maintain its viability and corporate existence through a mostly Jim Crow period.

This man-made disaster in Princeville has caused irreparable and inestimable damage, historically, culturally, psychologically, physically, environmentally and economically. These persons of African ancestry are victims and are entitled to that compensation which would make them whole to the extent possible. The residents have already voted to rebuild the town with or without federal assistance. To date, the federal government has been insensitive to their plight and has categorically refused to acknowledge them as victims. Heretofore, the federal government is bent on removing this historic town from our collective memories and erasing the struggles of our people to be recognized in the United States as human beings.

Collectively, Rev. Al Sharpton and I have visited the Princeville area several times since the occurrence of Hurricane Floyd in September 1999. We have witnessed first hand the total damage. On Thanksgiving, our respective organizations -National Action Network and United African Movement- fed the homeless of this historic town. Princeville residents have been

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relocated to a segregated trailer park under the auspices of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. These organizations sponsored a trip to the Princeville area from New York City with gifts filled to the brim in a 23'x10' truck for the homeless victims on December 25. It was freezing in North Carolina. Young children of Mexican and African ancestry came to receive gifts without shoes or coats. This is symptomatic of the plight of many of these impoverished residents.

The federal government must act comprehensively, decisively and immediately. This matter is a major concern in our community and it will impact on any federal campaign for political office. A candidate should be judged not by her rhetoric but by her actions. This action must be engaged in and completed before the next federal election. Although we have lived under the maniacal rule of Rudolph Giuliani since 1994, African people in New York City are not so desperate that we will automatically and summarily vote for any of his political adversaries.

Very truly yours,


Alton H. Maddox, Jr.

AHM:sr

BY HAND

Memorandum for Mrs. Clinton

From: Shirley Sagawa

Re: Rebuilding Princeville

Date: March 2, 2000

I wanted to give you an update on the federal response to the flooding of Princeville, NC, following Hurricane Floyd.

This week, the President issued an executive order to create an interagency council to development recommendations to address the future of Princeville.

As you know, Princeville is historically important because it was founded by freed slaves in 1865, making it the oldest African American township in the country. It was built on undesirable land on a floodplain, the only land available to the freed slaves at the time, and it has been flooded a dozen times since its founding. As a result, very few historic buildings remain in the town, although prior to Hurricane Floyd the town had been preparing to apply to have the Town Hall recognized in the National Register of Historic Places and had been working with the National Park Service on a heritage trail along the river. (The Millennium Council is tracking developments related to Princeville's historic designation.)

The most recent flood decimated the town, leaving 2,000 residents without homes. Most are living in a FEMA-created trailer park. FEMA gave the town the option of relocating – under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, if the town agreed to relocate, FEMA would have bought all the property at its Fair Market Value prior to the flooding. Many residents wanted to take the buy-out, not wanting to be a “prisoner of their history,” as one put it. However, under pressure from national leaders of the African American community (Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Alton Maddox), the town council voted down the buy-out by one vote (3 to 2).

Residents of the town *are* eligible for other assistance and FEMA is going out of its way to ensure that all residents receive what they are legally entitled to. In a highly unusual step, FEMA has hired Hezekiah Stewart, whom I believe you know, to work full time assisting the residents of Princeville. Hezekiah has experience in disaster recovery (he assisted in the recovery of College Station, Arkansas) and in this assignment, he reports directly to James Lee Witt. HUD has also set up a disaster recovery office specifically to aid residents of this region. Other agencies have been involved in assisting the area, including EPA, the Public Health Service, the Department of Defense, and AmeriCorps.

Currently, the Army Corps of Engineers is at work rebuilding and upgrading the levee that was breached during the hurricane. Residents of Princeville are *not* being forced to relocate. Rather, they have the option of applying for funds to repair their homes, for temporary housing, and for other forms of assistance. Last month, the Vice President announced that FEMA has made additional \$2.5 million available to rebuild 50 public housing apartments.

Because the assistance available to them is less than they would have received had the town opted for the buy-out, some residents may be unhappy. However, Cabinet Affairs has been monitoring the situation closely and reports that the Mayor of Princeville, Delia Perkins, is very satisfied with the federal response.

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 29, 2000

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF
PRINCEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to develop recommendations for Federal agency actions to address the future of Princeville, North Carolina, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. Princeville, North Carolina (Princeville) has a unique place in American history. This small city in eastern North Carolina was the first city in the United States founded by ex-slaves. In its history, Princeville has been damaged by floods many times. Recently, it was devastated by floods caused by Hurricane Floyd. In response to the damage, appropriate Federal agencies have already begun repair and recovery efforts to assist Princeville. However, it is the policy of this Administration to do more to help this city that occupies such a significant place in our history. Therefore, this order will create an interagency council to develop recommendations for further actions to address the future of Princeville.

Sec. 2. Establishment. (a) There is established the "President's Council on the Future of Princeville, North Carolina" (Council). The Council shall comprise the Secretaries of Defense, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Commander of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, and the Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, or their designees, and such other executive department and agency (agencies) representatives as the President may deem appropriate. The Council shall consult with other agencies and State and local governments, as appropriate.

(b) The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, or his designee, shall serve as Chair of the Council.

Sec. 3. Functions. The Council shall develop recommendations for the President on further agency and legislative actions that can be undertaken to address the future of Princeville. In developing the recommendations, the Council shall consider, among other things: (a) the unique historic and cultural importance of Princeville in American history; (b) the views and recommendations of the relevant State and local governments, the private sector, citizens, community groups, and non-profit organizations, on

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(OVER)

actions that they all could take to enhance the future of Princeville and its citizens; and (c) agency assessments and recommendations to repair and rebuild Princeville, and, to the extent practicable, protect Princeville from future floods. The Council, through its Chair, shall submit its recommendations to the President. Where appropriate, the Council's recommendations shall include draft legislation requesting additional funding or other authorities to aid in the reconstruction and protection of Princeville.

Sec. 4. Coordination. At the request of the Chair, agencies shall cooperate with and provide information to the Council.

Sec. 5. Judicial Review. This order is not intended to, nor does it create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers or employees, or any other person.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,
February 29, 2000.

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Memorandum for Mrs. Clinton

From: Shirley Sagawa

Re: Rebuilding Princeville

Date: February 10, 2000

I have looked into FEMA's response to the flooding of Princeville, NC, following Hurricane Floyd.

As you know, Princeville is historically important because it was founded by freed slaves in 1865, making it the oldest African American township in the country. It was built on undesirable land on a floodplain, the only land available to the freed slaves at the time, and it has been flooded a dozen times since its founding. As a result, very few historic buildings remain in the town, although prior to Hurricane Floyd the town had been preparing to apply to have the Town Hall recognized in the National Register of Historic Places and had been working with the National Park Service on a heritage trail along the river. (The Millennium Council is tracking developments related to Princeville's historic designation.)

The most recent flood decimated the town, leaving 2,000 residents without homes. Most are living in a FEMA-created trailer park. FEMA gave the town the option of relocating – under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, if the town agreed to relocate, FEMA would have bought all the property at its Fair Market Value prior to the flooding. Many residents wanted to take the buy-out, not wanting to be a “prisoner of their history,” as one put it. However, under pressure from national leaders of the African American community (Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Alton Maddox), the town council voted down the buy-out by one vote (3 to 2).

Residents of the town *are* eligible for other assistance and FEMA is going out of its way to ensure that all residents receive what they are legally entitled to. In a highly unusual step, FEMA has hired Hezekiah Stewart, whom I believe you know, to work full time assisting the residents of Princeville. Hezekiah has experience in disaster recovery (he assisted in the recovery of College Station, Arkansas) and in this assignment, he reports directly to James Lee Witt. HUD has also set up a disaster recovery office specifically to aid residents of this region. Other agencies have been involved in assisting the area, including EPA, the Public Health Service, the Department of Defense, and AmeriCorps.

Currently, the Army Corps of Engineers is at work rebuilding and upgrading the levee that was breached during the hurricane. Residents of Princeville are *not* being forced to relocate. Rather, they have the option of applying for funds to repair their homes, for temporary housing, and for other forms of assistance. Last month, the Vice President announced that FEMA has made additional \$2.5 million available to rebuild 50 public housing apartments.

Because the assistance available to them is less than they would have received had the town opted for the buy-out, some residents may be unhappy. However, Cabinet Affairs has been monitoring the situation closely and reports that the Mayor of Princeville, Delia Perkins, is very satisfied with the federal response.

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February 10, 1999

Alton H. Maddox, Jr.
16 Court Street, Suite 1901
Brooklyn, NY 11241

Dear Mr. Maddox:

I, too, am deeply concerned about the plight of the residents of Princeville.

I have been aware of Princeville for some time due to its undeniable historic importance, and agree that the federal government should do all that it can to assist the residents who have been displaced by recent tragedies. I am pleased to report that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has assigned my friend, Hezekiah Stewart, to work full time assisting the residents of Princeville. Hezekiah has experience in disaster recovery (he assisted in the recovery of College Station, Arkansas), and in his assignment reports directly to FEMA Director James Lee Witt. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has also set up a disaster recovery office specifically to aid residents of this region. In conjunction with resident assistance, the Army Corps of Engineers is at work rebuilding and upgrading the levee that was breached during the hurricane.

Residents of Princeville are not being forced to relocate. Rather, they have the option of applying for funds to repair their homes, for temporary housing, and for other forms of assistance. Last month, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) made an additional \$2.5 million available to rebuild 50 apartments. While no amount of money can make up for the suffering experienced by the families who have lost their homes, I trust these funds are a good start. Of course, a long-term recovery plan is needed, and FEMA and the White House are working closely with Mayor Perkins on that effort.

I will continue to monitor the situation and appreciate your raising it with me.

Sincerely,

Hillary Rodham Clinton

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Alton H. Maddox, Jr.
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*Draft response -
Please sign or
initial*

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