



**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**JU'COBY PITTMAN**  
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May 7, 2021

The Honorable Marcia Fudge  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, D. C. 20410

Dear Secretary Fudge:

My name is Ju'Coby Pittman, City Council Member of District 8, Jacksonville, Florida. Thank you for allowing me to share the inhumane concerns of residents who feel voiceless and who are sick and tired of being sick and tired. On Tuesday, May 4, I was appalled at the rats, rodents, and mold conditions upon my visit with the Jacksonville Code Enforcement Division, at Hill Top Village Apartments located at 1646 W. 45th Street, Jacksonville, Florida. I observed the inspection process and listened to the residents sharing their repeated encounters and complaints over a two-year period to management. Unfortunately, these issues to date have not been resolved and or with no improvement of conditions for compliance. Some residents advised me, that they were afraid to continue to report issues because they were concerned of retaliation.

I'm angry and frustrated because the residents are feeling helpless. The living environment in the apartments at Hill Top Village is unacceptable and despicable for parents to raise their children. The unexpected visit to the resident's apartments was clean and in order as much as possible. Residents shouldn't feel like they live in prison while watching the infestation of rats and rodents taken over a place they call home. Secretary Fudge, I am requesting your support in Shutting Down this dated housing stock and condemn the buildings for the reasons I have observed and stated. Please advise how you can assist with this request immediately with a plan of action.

There is an infestation in 13 out of the 14 buildings, so I would like these buildings condemned. Rats carry diseases that are dangerous for the families living in the Hill Top community. Rats run throughout the apartments and across the ceiling light fixtures. They exist in the walls, the appliances, the A/C units, and between the floors of the apartments. I witnessed the overcrowding of the rodents, to the point they are nesting on the kitchen floor and kitchen drawers, etc., which is a health and safety concern.



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Information from the Mayo Clinic and CDC states that eating food or drinking water that has been contaminated with rat saliva, urine, or scat is potentially very dangerous for human consumption. Diseases transmitted via contamination (to name a few) are Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome, Leptospirosis, and Salmonellosis. One of the diseases stated: "Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome is an infectious disease characterized by flu-like symptoms that can progress rapidly to potentially life-threatening breathing problems" that can cause harm.

Based on this information compounded with the facts and proof of a total infestation (again, 13 out of 14 units has rats/rodents) alone should be enough to sound the alarm and begin to move toward getting these residents out of harm's way and addressing this travesty immediately.

Attention and a solution to this complex are needed NOW! Your assistance in ensuring these families deserve a quality life, not injustices, with a bandage approach by the management company and or the on-site staff should not be acceptable. Together, I want to work with you to address these critical issues and relieve the mental stress from the residents that I'm bring to your attention.

The opportunity to develop new housing stock, economic alignment, and create a platform for viability, availability, and long-term sustainability is essential. It is critical to insulate neighborhoods like Hill Top Village Apartment with an implementation strategy plan and a timeline for development. An assessment needs to become a priority and develop legislation **to address repeated bad management offenders and enforce hefty fines** will be effective. In addition, a targeted scope of action will meet the demands and problems with a holistic approach immediately post-COVID-19. The reinvestment for affordable housing stock in Health Zone 1 and this Opportunity Zone will bring the quality of life and economic development back into this community, which is historically documented and neglected by the public and private sector for transformational opportunities. Repurposing the land and investing will be a "Game Changer" for residents and the community. Currently, Hill Top Apartments operations and its management record, doesn't represent anything good.



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As a voice for District 8, we need your HELP, support, and consideration. I hope we can count on you. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at (904) 255-5208. I look forward to your immediate response. Thank you.

Sincerely

Ju'Coby Pittman  
City Council Member, District 8

cc: Congressman Al Lawson  
Congressman John Rutherford  
U. S. Senator Marco Rubio  
Mayor Lenny Curry  
Senator Aaron Bean  
Senator Rick Scott  
Representative Wyman Duggan  
Representative Jason Fischer  
Senator Audrey Gibson  
Representative Tracy Davis  
Representative Angie Nixon  
HUD Alesia Scott- Ford  
JHA Dwayne Alexander  
Jacksonville City Council Members  
Superintendent Diana Green  
School Board Member Darryl Willie