

August 3, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Fudge:

I write to direct your attention to the mismanagement of Monaco Arms Apartments in the Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance program under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

On July 10, 2023, I received disturbing evidence of safety hazards at Monaco Arms Apartments that property management has failed to address, including potential gas leaks. Constituents reported monthly natural gas bills in the thousands of dollars and leaking gas meters positioned near the front doors of their apartments. Large propane tanks were placed in dangerous locations on the property, including next to a playground. Burn marks were observed on the property's playground, which caught fire when fireworks, in celebration of Independence Day, were displayed. According to First Coast News, the flames from this fire nearly reached the dangerously placed propane tanks.¹

My staff reached out to HUD to share these concerns immediately after learning of them on July 10. After more than three weeks and several requests, my office has yet to receive evidence of any actions taken by HUD to protect the safety of residents. Gas leaks pose a serious health and safety risk, not only because of the fire hazard they present, but also because prolonged exposure to natural gas can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

According to HUD's public listings of REAC inspection scores, Monaco Arms was last inspected on August 3, 2021, when it received a score of 95b/100. Today, August 3, 2023, marks two years since this property's last inspection.

Given HUD's unresponsiveness thus far, I am concerned the residents of Monaco Arms are not experiencing the safe living standards they are guaranteed by law. If a representative of the agency has not visited the apartment complex since July 10, 2023, I urge you to dispatch someone immediately to take action. This must include alleviation of any active gas leaks on the property, relocation of propane tanks to a safer place, updated REAC inspections, and a Management and Occupancy Review (MOR) for the property. Please respond with a detailed account of HUD's actions and concerns posed in this letter no later than Monday, August 7th.

¹ <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/residents-demand-answers-amid-claims-of-gas-leaks-in-apartments/77-8ad7bb91-157f-4cc1-a7bc-4d67b0f779f3>

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to working with you to protect the people of Florida, and the families of Monaco Arms Apartments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator