



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20416

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

NOV 8 2005

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
ATTN: Ms. Kevin Wheeler

Dear Senator Kerry:

Thank you for your letter of October 25, 2005 regarding the closure of one of the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) temporary loan assistance centers in Miami.

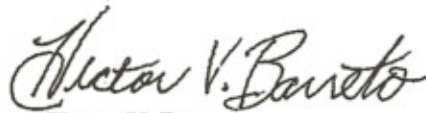
The center, located at 1409 N.W. 3rd Avenue opened on Monday, October 6, 2005 as a result of an SBA Agency declaration requested by Governor Bush. This was an SBA Agency declaration and not a Presidential declaration. The only assistance available to the victims in the declared counties was low-interest rate loans from SBA.

This center was open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Only five disaster victims visited this center during the last three days of its operation. With the lack of interested disaster victims, SBA made the decision to close this center. Disaster victims were still able to get assistance by calling SBA's Customer Service Center on our toll-free number.

In the wake of Hurricane Wilma, Miami-Dade County was not declared eligible for individual assistance (including SBA's disaster loan program) until Wednesday, October 26, 2005, when the Presidential declaration was amended. In Presidential declarations, the Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinates the locations of the Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) with state and local officials. I assure you that outreach is very important to SBA and that there will be representatives available in every DRC to help meet the needs of Florida residents in the aftermath of Wilma.

Thank you for your continued support of the disaster loan program. If you or your staff have additional questions, please contact Janis Coughlin-Piester in our Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs at (202) 205-6700.

Sincerely,


Hector V. Barreto
Administrator