



October 17, 2011

Senator Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
722 Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Thad Cochran
Vice Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Patty Murray
Chairman, Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Susan Collins
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban Development
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

The National Housing Conference (NHC) thanks you for including \$120 million for the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative in the 2012 Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. We strongly urge you to remind your Senate colleagues of the importance of this program for revitalizing distressed HUD-funded affordable housing properties. Attached is a support letter already submitted by the Choice Neighborhoods Coalition that provides more detail in support of the program.

For 80 years, the National Housing Conference has advocated for decent, safe, and affordable housing for all Americans. In keeping with that mission, we sincerely ask for your continued support of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative in the FY 2012 appropriations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jeanne K Engel'.

Jeanne Engel
Interim President and CEO
National Housing Conference

The CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS COALITION

Senator Daniel K. Inouye
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Senator Susan Collins
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban Development
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

September 28, 2011

Dear Senators:

We are writing to express our appreciation to you for including \$120 million for the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative in the 2012 Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. This is very exciting, and we urge you to renew your efforts to underscore to your Senate colleagues the importance of this program that will leverage millions in private funding to restore economic vitality and redevelop blighted HUD-assisted housing in our towns and cities.

The undersigned are all members of the Choice Neighborhoods Coalition, a diverse, voluntary group of public, private and nonprofit entities that collaborate to support and promote the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative. As you know, the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative builds on the successes of the HOPE-VI program and incorporates an innovative, holistic approach to solving the dire needs of distressed HUD-assisted housing, by leveraging private resources to address not only the distressed housing but also the community blight that often surrounds failed housing developments. Choice Neighborhoods creates jobs and results in a ripple effect, attracting new private investment in the revived communities. As a comprehensive, place-based approach to serving both people and neighborhoods, the program holds great promise as the way to reduce concentrated poverty and revitalize distressed communities.

The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is unique in addressing the comprehensive community revitalization challenges of distressed communities. In addition, programs such as HOME – which provides critical “gap” funding for affordable housing projects – are also essential to meet the high demand for affordable housing across the nation.

The demand for Choice funding is significant. HUD received 161 applications for the 2010 funding round for Choice Planning Grants and could fund only 15 percent of these. This demand demonstrates the wisdom of the Choice Neighborhoods approach of giving localities a tool to deal with neighborhood dysfunction exacerbated by distressed housing developments.

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Again, we thank you for your support of the Choice Neighborhoods Program. We, and our constituents, will count on you to assure funding for this critical program in the final Appropriations legislation; we stand ready to help your effort in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Atlanta Housing Authority
The Community Builders, Inc.
City of Oklahoma City
Community Preservation and Development Corporation
E. R. Bacon Development, LLC
Enterprise Community Partners
Housing Partnership Network
The Integral Group, LLC
International Relief and Development
Jonathan Rose Companies
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
McCormack Baron Salazar
Mercy Housing
National Housing and Rehabilitation Association
National Housing Trust
Perry Rose, LLC
Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc.
Purpose Built Communities
Rebuilding Together
The Related Companies of California
Romero Rose, LLC
Smart Growth America
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future (SAHF)