



Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding

Working to ensure maximum federal resources for housing and community development.

June 15, 2011

Hon. John Boehner
Office of the Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Eric Cantor
Office of the House Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Kevin McCarthy
Office of the House Majority Whip
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Harold Rogers
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Office of the House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Steny Hoyer
Office of the House Minority Whip
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. James Clyburn
Office of the House Assistant Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Norman Dicks
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Leadership of the House of Representatives:

The Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding (CHCDF) is a group of national organizations representing the housing needs of low and moderate income Americans and the community development needs of our nation's cities, suburbs, towns, tribal communities and rural areas. We are deeply concerned that the cuts to US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) rural housing programs, particularly the Section 521, 515, and 514/516 programs, proposed in H.R. 2112 – the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food & Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2012 would cause tens of thousands of families living in rural areas to lose their rental assistance. Such cuts would disproportionately harm extremely and very low income¹ Americans at a time when they most need this critical support.

The bill would take rental assistance away from more than 66,000 currently stably housed tenants² by cutting funding for the USDA's Section 521 Rental Assistance Program from \$955.6 million in FY11 to \$890 million for FY12. The 521 program provides much-needed rental assistance to some of the lowest income rural residents. Ninety-four percent of the households living in housing created by these programs have very low incomes, averaging \$11,364 annually.³ Additionally, 60 percent are elderly or people with disabilities.

The bill would also cut funding for preserving the government's investment in older USDA-funded developments that need repairs or renovations (the Multi-Family Preservation and Revitalization Program) and for development of

¹ HUD defines extremely low income as households with incomes below 30 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) and very low income as households with incomes below 50 percent of AMI.

² Calculation by the Housing Assistance Council based on data provided by USDA Rural Development.

³ Tammye H. Trevino, Administrator, Rural Housing Programs (August 5, 2010), Unnumbered Letter. Retrieved from: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/SupportDocuments/ulaugust10.pdf>

new rural affordable rental housing (the USDA's 515 Rural Rental Housing and 514/516 Farm Labor Housing Programs), by 100 percent, 16 percent, and 36.5 percent, respectively.

We recognize that the nation must reduce its deficit, but slashing critical domestic discretionary programs that serve vulnerable families will not solve our long-term fiscal problems. We remain very concerned that any substantial cuts to these rural housing programs would undermine the very economic recovery that the country so desperately needs, and runs counter to recent actions of the Administration to focus efforts on revitalizing and strengthening rural communities across America.

We urge Congress not to make cuts that will cause low income families, seniors, and people with disabilities to lose their housing and to preserve USDA's full portfolio of critical rural housing programs. Members of CHCDF stand ready to work with you to find responsible ways to continue to address our nation's housing and community development needs. CHCDF members can be reached via Melissa Quirk at National Low Income Housing Coalition at 202-662-1530 x230 or melissa@nlihc.org.

Sincerely,

Coalition on Human Needs
Community Action Partnership
Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force
Council for Affordable and Rural Housing
Council of State Community and Economic Development Agencies
Enterprise Community Partners
Housing Assistance Council
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
LeadingAge (*formerly AAHSA*)
Local Initiatives Support Coalition
Lutheran Services in America
Mennonite Central Committee U.S., Washington Office
National AIDS Housing Coalition
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National American Indian Housing Council
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Center on Family Homelessness
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Community Development Association
National Council of State Housing Agencies
National Disability Rights Network
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Housing Conference
National Housing Trust
National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National NeighborWorks Association
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
RISE, America!
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
Travelers Aid International
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Cc: The Honorable Harry Reid, Richard Durbin and Daniel Inouye
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Jon Kyl and Thad Cochran