

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2010

The Honorable John Olver
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Latham
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
2349 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member:

The economic downturn and the continued flood of foreclosures have heightened the need for affordable housing and stabilizing investments in communities. Support of public housing, tenant- and project-based Section 8, housing for the elderly (Section 202), the disabled (Section 811) and persons with HIV and AIDS, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the HOME Investment Partnerships program and Community Development Block Grants is critically needed to keep individuals and families stably housed through the recession, enabling children to succeed in school and adults to maintain employment. We urge you to fully fund these programs in the Transportation and Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill.

Public housing serves 1.2 million of the nation's most vulnerable families in rural and urban communities throughout the country. Research shows that families in public housing have better outcomes than similar households without housing assistance. It is crucial to maintain this important resource, particularly at a time when only one in four eligible families receives assistance.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided \$4 billion for critically needed public housing capital repairs. These funds not only improved our housing stock and the lives of families, but quickly created labor-intensive jobs in the areas of construction and energy efficient retrofitting. However, this funding was only a small step towards reducing the estimated \$20 to \$30 billion in needed capital repairs. We therefore request that you appropriate \$5 billion for the public housing capital fund in FY 2011. We also request \$5 billion for the public housing operating fund. Both of these funding streams are essential to keep up with ongoing needs, address the repair backlog, and continue to create jobs in our communities.

We are pleased by the President's commitment in the FY 2011 budget to rental assistance programs, which serve 3.2 million families nationwide. We request that you fund the project-based rental assistance account at the \$9.38 billion requested in the budget, and that you fund the tenant-based rental assistance account at \$19.55 billion. This funding will ensure that project-based units do not convert to market rates and that all existing housing vouchers are renewed.

It is also critical to continue to expand the supply of affordable housing for our most vulnerable citizens, including the elderly, persons with disabilities and persons with HIV and AIDS. According to the most recent available data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), there are 1.29 million elderly and 542,000 individuals with disabilities paying more than half of their income towards housing or living in substandard conditions. We therefore request that you appropriate \$825 million for housing for the elderly (Section 202) and \$300 million for housing for individuals with disabilities (Section 811), which would provide level funding relative to FY 2010. We also request that you fund the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program at the \$340 million level requested in the FY 2011 budget.

We also ask that you support additional housing capital programs. Specifically, we request that you appropriate the \$1 billion for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund proposed in the President's FY 2011 budget. The Trust Fund will, once capitalized, provide communities with funds to build, preserve, and rehabilitate rental homes that are affordable for extremely- and very low-income households. Additionally, we request that you maintain funding for the HOME Investment Partnership Program at \$1.825 billion, which will enable states and local governments to partner with local nonprofit groups to fund a wide range of activities that build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing.

The CDBG program is essential for the functioning of cities of all shapes and sizes. The program suffered severe funding cuts under the Bush Administration, with CDBG funds being cut 45 percent (in inflation adjusted terms) from FY 2001 to FY 2008. In order for cities and states to fully recover from what HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan called a long period of "slow starvation," we request that you appropriate \$4.5 billion for the program in FY 2011.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this urgently needed request. Please contact Amanda Fischer with Chairwoman Waters at extension 6-3503 with any questions about this letter.

Sincerely,













Luis Carnahan

Peter Welch

Michael S. Capron

Lain Capps

Yvette D. Clarke

John Longenecker

Maura H. [unclear]

[Large stylized signature]

Flowers

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