

October 10, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. President and Mr. Secretary:

The undersigned organizations and individuals, representing a wide network of non-profit and for-profit corporations, public agencies and others that use or support the USDA rural housing programs, are writing to urge you to propose FY 2015 funding for those programs at least at their FY 2011 appropriated levels.

Serving rural America successfully since 1950, the USDA housing programs meet critical housing needs. Often providing the only decent, safe, sanitary and affordable shelter for very low- and low-income households, these programs create and preserve housing that maintains the vitality and economic stability of rural communities. Their continued support is essential.

We strongly disagree with your efforts in recent years to eliminate or drastically reduce funding for many of the USDA housing programs. Congress, on a completely bi-partisan basis, has rejected those efforts every year. We ask that you reconsider your position and maintain these programs in your FY 2015 budget.

Specifically, we urge continuation of the Sec. 502 single family direct homeownership loan program that has helped over 2 million low- and moderate-income rural families become successful homeowners. Many of these families would have become subprime borrowers without the 502 direct program. We recognize that you have supported and that Congress has funded the Sec. 502 guaranteed loan program at a very high level. We do not oppose that support, but we also know that the two programs serve very different populations that are both in urgent need of affordable housing.

Other very important USDA housing programs – for example, Sec. 523 self-help, Sec. 514/516 farm labor housing, Sec. 504 repair loans and grants, Sec. 533 preservation, and the Rural Community Development Initiative – are small, with very little budget impact, but highly effective. We hope that your FY 2015 budget will also continue funding for these programs at 2011 levels.

We urge you to propose funding of Sec. 515 rental housing at the level sought in your 2011 and 2012 budgets (\$95.2 million). The preservation of the existing Sec. 515 rental housing stock is also extremely important. Section 515 serves a largely elderly and disabled population with an average household income of \$11,100.

Many of the low-income residents of USDA-financed rental properties also receive Sec. 521 Rental Assistance. This program's funding must rise every year just to keep up with inflation and the growing gap between incomes and rents, and sequestration in FY 2013 is threatening the continuation of assistance to those who already rely on it. We ask you to calculate carefully how much Rental Assistance will be needed to renew all expiring contracts, to fill the gap left by

funding cuts in 2013 if it is not filled in 2014, and to aid tenants in newly constructed USDA rentals.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss rural housing. Thank you for considering our views.

Housing Assistance Council	Washington	DC
Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama	Birmingham	AL
Hale Empowerment and Revitalization Organization Inc. (HERO)	Greensboro	AL
Northwest Regional Housing Authority	Harrison	AR
Patricia Atkinson	Russellville	AR
Universal Housing Development Corporation	Russellville	AR
Delta Studies Center-ASU	State University	AR
Chicanos Por La Causa	Phoenix	AZ
Campeños Sin Fronteras	Somerton	AZ
Housing America Corporation	Somerton	AZ
Community Housing Improvement Program	Chico	CA
Self-Help Home Improvement Project	Redding	CA
California Coalition for Rural Housing	Sacramento	CA
Rural Community Assistance Corp.	Sacramento	CA
Sacramento Housing Alliance	Sacramento	CA
William Powers	Sacramento	CA
California Housing Partnership	San Francisco	CA
National Housing Law Project	San Francisco	CA
Burbank Housing Development Corporation	Santa Rosa	CA
Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation	Ventura	CA
Self-Help Enterprises	Visalia	CA
Tom Collishaw	Visalia	CA
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO	Washington	DC
LeadingAge	Washington	DC
National Coalition for the Homeless	Washington	DC
National Council of State Housing Agencies	Washington	DC
National Housing Conference	Washington	DC
National Housing Trust	Washington	DC
National Low Income Housing Coalition	Washington	DC
National Rural Housing Coalition	Washington	DC
Rural Community Assistance Partnership	Washington	DC
Rural LISC	Washington	DC
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future	Washington	DC
NCALL Research, Inc.	Dover	DE
Sherry DeZwarte	Dover	DE
Milford Housing Development Corporation	Milford	DE
Homes in Partnership, Inc.	Apopka	FL
Florida Home Partnership	Ruskin	FL
Florida Non-Profit Housing	Sebring	FL

Santos De La Rosa	Sebring	FL
St. Johns Housing Partnership, Inc.	St. Augustine	FL
Habitat for Humanity International	Atlanta	GA
Self-Help Housing Corporation of Hawaii	Honolulu	HI
HEAR US, Inc.	Naperville	IL
Northwest Kansas Housing, Inc.	Hill City	KS
Homestead Affordable Housing	Holton	KS
Homestead Community Development	Holton	KS
Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services	Wichita	KS
Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises	Berea	KY
Hazard Perry County Community Ministries	Hazard	KY
Housing Development Alliance, Inc.	Hazard	KY
Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation	London	KY
Southern Tier Housing Corporation	London	KY
Next Step Network	Louisville	KY
Kentucky Mountain Housing Development Corporation, Inc.,	Manchester	KY
Frontier Housing	Morehead	KY
Sherry Farley	Morehead	KY
Tom Carew	Morehead	KY
People's Self-Help Housing, Inc.	Vanceburg	KY
HOMES, Inc.	Whitesburg	KY
CENLA Area Agency on Aging, Inc.	Alexandria	LA
Seventh District Pavilion	Crowley	LA
Pilgrim Rest Community Development Agency	Empire	LA
Southern Mutual Help Association, Inc.	New Iberia	LA
Enterprise Community Partners	Columbia	MD
Avesta Housing	Portland	ME
Maine Affordable Housing Coalition	Portland	ME
Western Maine Community Action	Wilton	ME
CEI	Wiscasset	ME
Bartlett C. Beavin	Ann Arbor	MI
Opportunity Resource Fund	Lansing	MI
Heather Thormodson	Battle Lake	MN
Integrated Community Solutions, Inc.	Fridley	MN
Minnesota Community Action Partnership	St. Paul	MN
Minnesota Housing Partnership	St. Paul	MN
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency	Virginia	MN
Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.	Zumbrota	MN
Economic Security Corporation of SW Area	Joplin	MO
East Missouri Action Agency, Inc.	Park Hills	MO
Ozark Foothills RPC	Poplar Bluff	MO
AFGE Local 3354	St. Louis	MO
Green Hills Community Action Agency	Trenton	MO
Central Mississippi, Inc.	Kosciusko	MS
Esther Stewart Buford Foundation	Yazoo City	MS

Law Office of L.W. West	Durham	NC
Southern Real Estate Management & Consultants, Inc.	Durham	NC
Housing Assistance Corporation	Hendersonville	NC
Wilson Community Improvement Association, Inc.	Wilson	NC
Turtle Mountain Housing Authority	Belcourt	ND
Coalition of Indian Housing Authorities in North Dakota	Bismarck	ND
Spirit Lake Housing Corporation	Fort Totten	ND
SW Neighborhood Housing Services	Albuquerque	NM
Tierra del Sol Housing Corporation	Anthony	NM
Siete del Norte CDC	Embudo	NM
Native Community Finance	Laguna	NM
NYS Rural Housing Coalition	Albany	NY
Arbor Housing and Development	Bath	NY
NYS Rural Advocates	Blue Mountain Lake	NY
Frontier Housing Corporation	Dexter	NY
Housing Assistance Program of Essex County	Elizabethtown	NY
Delaware Opportunities Inc.	Hamden	NY
Friends of the North Country, Inc.	Keeseville	NY
Snow Belt Housing Company, Inc.	Lowville	NY
Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation, Inc.	Rochester	NY
PathStone Corporation	Rochester	NY
Albany County Rural Housing Alliance, Inc.	Voorheesville	NY
Hudson Valley Housing Development Fund Company, Inc.	Wappingers Falls	NY
Ohio CDC Association	Columbus	OH
Ohio Poverty Law Center	Columbus	OH
Community Action Commission of Fayette County	Washington Court House	OH
Joan Edge	Hugo	OK
Little Dixie CAA	Hugo	OK
Charles Gourd	Park Hill	OK
Latimer County Housing Authority, Inc.	Stigler	OK
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing	Portland	OR
CASA of Oregon	Sherwood	OR
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania	Jenkintown	PA
Fayette County Community Action Corporation	Uniontown	PA
Jill E. Lordan	York	PA
PathStone Corporation Puerto Rico Division	Ponce	PR
Creative Compassion, Inc.	Crossville	TN
Morgan Scott Project	Deer Lodge	TN
Serenity Pointe, Inc.	Dunlap	TN
Eastern Eight Community Development Corporation	Johnson City	TN
Knox Housing Partnership	Knoxville	TN
Foothills Community Development Corporation	Maryville	TN
South Texas Civil Rights Project	Alamo	TX
BDT Housing Services Enterprise	Alvarado	TX
House the Homeless, Inc.	Austin	TX

Motivation Education & Training, Inc.	Austin	TX
Lower Valley Housing Corporation	Fabens	TX
RAISE Texas	Austin	TX
Texas Low Income Housing Information Service	Austin	TX
Community Development Corporation of Brownsville	Brownsville	TX
Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network	Brownsville	TX
Neighborhood Housing Services of Dimmit County, Inc.	Carrizo Springs	TX
Del Rio Housing Authority	Del Rio	TX
Harlingen Community Development Corporation	Harlingen	TX
Action Gypsum Supply, L.P.	Houston	TX
Affordable Homes of South Texas, Inc.	McAllen	TX
La Union del Pueblo Entero	San Juan	TX
Proyecto Azteca	San Juan	TX
Neighborhood Nonprofit	Logan	UT
Mountainlands Community Housing Trust	Park City	UT
Brad Bishop	Provo	UT
Self-Help Homes	Provo	UT
Crossroads Urban Center	Salt Lake City	UT
Assisted Living Foundation	Santaquin	UT
Council for Affordable and Rural Housing	Alexandria	VA
John Frisk	Arlington	VA
Community Housing Partners	Christiansburg	VA
Southeast RCAP	Roanoke	VA
Helping Overcome Poverty's Existence (HOPE)	Wytheville	VA
Champlain Housing Trust	Burlington	VT
Housing Vermont	Burlington	VT
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition	Burlington	VT
RuralEdge	Lyndonville	VT
Vermont Housing & Conservation Board	Montpelier	VT
Cathedral Square Corporation	South Burlington	VT
Whatcom Skagit Housing	Bellingham	WA
Housing Kitsap	Bremerton	WA
McLoughlin & Associates LLC	Gig Harbor	WA
Community Frameworks	Spokane	WA
Catholic Charities Housing Services, Diocese of Yakima	Yakima	WA
Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing	Yakima	WA
UMOS	Milwaukee	WI
Pedro Rodriguez, Jr.	Waukesha	WI
Mountain CAP of WV, Inc., a CDC	Buckhannon	WV
HomeOwnership Center	Elkins	WV
Fairmont-Morgantown Housing Authority	Fairmont	WV
Almost Heaven Habitat for Humanity	Franklin	WV
Southern Appalachian Labor School	Kincaid	WV
Wyoming Community Development Authority	Casper	WY

Cc:

Rep. Harold Rogers
Rep. Nita Lowey
Rep. Robert Aderholt
Rep. Sam Farr

Sen. Barbara Mikulski
Sen. Richard Shelby
Sen. Mark Pryor
Sen. Roy Blunt