



NATIONAL RURAL HOUSING COALITION



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Take the 2013 NRHC Impact Survey

Rural housing organizations are in the midst of a very challenging political climate. Congress and the President are under increased pressure to continue to cut government spending. In this difficult environment, rural housing and community development programs must find new and better ways demonstrate their impact and effectiveness.

That's why we invite **all rural housing organizations** to participate in our 2013 Impact Survey.

[Take the 2013 NRHC Impact Survey Today!](#)

The more organizations that participate, the better we can document the critical role rural housing organizations play in planning, developing, financing, and building affordable housing. To help us strengthen our voice on Capitol Hill, send this survey to other rural housing organizations in your communities and ask them to participate.

This survey is one part of our larger strategy to collect data on rural housing successes. Recently, we published a report on how USDA's Section 502 Direct Loan and Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Housing programs have [expanded rural homeownership opportunities](#). This year, we plan to release similar reports on the successes of USDA's Multi-Family Housing and Farm Labor Housing programs.

Please complete the survey and return it to Sarah Mickelson at sarah@rapoza.org by February 15, 2013. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Sarah via email or at 202-204-3952. And, remember to submit the survey only once; a number of organizations are assisting NRHC in disseminating this survey, so you may receive it from many sources. For more information, please read my letter [introducing the survey](#).

Thank you in advance for helping make this survey a success.

Thank you for your support,

Bob Rapoza

Reminder: 2013 Impact Survey

This is a friendly reminder to all rural housing organizations to **complete NRHC's 2013 Impact Survey by February 15th.**

As you know, rural housing organizations are in the midst of a very challenging political climate. Congress and the President are under increased pressure to continue to cut government spending. As a result, rural housing and community development programs must find new and better ways demonstrate their impact and effectiveness.

That's why we invite **all rural housing organizations** to participate in our 2013 Impact Survey.

[Take the 2013 NRHC Impact Survey Today!](#)

The more organizations that participate, the better we can document the critical role rural housing organizations play in planning, developing, financing, and building affordable housing.

Please, complete the survey and return it to Sarah Mickelson at sarah@rapoza.org by February 15, 2013. Please submit only one survey per organization. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sarah via email or at 202-204-3952. For more information, please read my letter [introducing the survey](#).

Thank you in advance for helping make this survey a success.

Thank you for your support,

Bob Rapoza

2013 Budget Outlook

2013 Budget Outlook

On January 23, 2013 the House of Representatives avoided another clash with the Senate and White House by “suspending” the statutory debt limit – also known as the “debt ceiling” – for about 90 days. H.R. 325 – *the No Budget, No Pay Act* – pushes off the debt limit until May 18, 2013 and requires both the House and the Senate to produce a budget resolution, outlining a blueprint for spending for Fiscal Year 2014. If they are unable to do so by April 15, 2013, Members of Congress will not receive their paychecks.

However, there are a number of events that are likely to trigger confrontations between the two sides, including the release of the President's FY14 Budget (Week of March 1), the Budget Control Act Sequester (March 1), the expiration of the FY13 Continuing Resolution (CR), and the suspension of the debt ceiling limit (May 19).

President's FY14 Budget

Early in March, the President will release his FY14 budget. It is entirely likely that it will include additional deficit reduction proposals designed to reach the 10-year, \$4 trillion goal set by the Simpson-Bowles Commission. Since the release of the Simpson-Bowles Report in December of 2010, deficit reduction has totaled about \$2.3 trillion. Of that amount, \$ 1.7 trillion has come from spending reductions and \$617 billion from increased tax revenue. This leaves us with another \$1.7 trillion in spending cuts and tax revenues to go before reaching this goal.

As you know, in last year's failed negotiations with the House leadership, the Administration offered a 10-year plan that increased tax revenues by \$1.2 trillion and cut spending by \$1.22 trillion – including \$400 billion in cuts from healthcare, \$200 billion in cuts to other mandatory spending, \$200 billion in discretionary spending (split 50/50 between defense and non-defense programs), and \$225 billion in savings from revisions to cost of living formulas for federal programs such as Social Security. We may see many – if not all – of these proposals in the Administration's budget request.

At this moment, federal agencies are preparing appeals to the “passbacks” they received from OMB in response to their proposed FY14 budgets. In a passback, OMB and the Administration respond to an agency's proposed budget, setting off a round of negotiations before the President's final Budget

Request is issued. If rumors are any indication, the Obama budget will be quite tough on domestic discretionary spending and on community development. Rural Development and Rural Housing are likely to be a target for reductions.

Budget Control Act Sequester

Around the same time that the budget is released, the first installment of the \$1 trillion sequester required by the Budget Control Act (BCA) is scheduled to go into effect. The tax bill compromise in December – *H.R. 8, The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012*– delayed the sequester by two months and offset two months of the cost. However, at this moment, it appears almost certain that the balance of the sequester will go forward with FY13 spending, including a 5.1 percent reduction for domestic programs, totaling \$26.4 billion, and a 7.3 percent reduction for defense, amounting to \$42.5 billion. Entitlement programs will be reduced by \$16 billion.

As this plays out, both the Senate and the House are proceeding on very different tracks for the FY14 budget plan. The House is committed to a budget resolution that will balance the budget over 10 years, without any new revenue. If you recall, the Ryan Budget that the House passed last year would not have balanced the budget until 2040. A 10-year target will include *even more severe reductions* than the Ryan Budget, which included deep cuts to domestic programs, including discretionary programs and mandatory accounts such as Medicaid and Medicare. On the other hand, the Senate's budget resolution will likely follow the President's budget and almost certainly will include additional revenue.

Expiration of the FY13 Continuing Resolution

Perhaps the most important event over the next 6 months is the expiration of the FY13 Continuing Resolution (CR), scheduled for March 27, 2013. It is likely that the House will demand that further spending cuts be attached to the CR extension, and they will likely look for a way to offset the sequester on defense programs.

The CR may provide the basis for an agreement that directs Congress to make changes to federal entitlement programs by a date certain to save a specified amount of money. For Democrats, any shaving of retirement or healthcare programs must be accompanied by additional revenue. Because the Bush Tax Cuts have already been addressed, the most likely remaining vehicle for any tax legislation will be tax reform. While the House now insists that any tax reform be revenue neutral, the White House and Senate continue to press for additional revenue.

Considering the distance between the two sides on any large-scale deficit reduction package, a more likely outcome is a small deal that continues to

nibble at the deficit problem, a deal that will probably only be reached after a government shutdown. Stay Tuned.

Summary of Key Dates

March 1 – Budget Control Act Sequester

Week of March 1 – President's Budget

March 27 – Expiration of FY 13 Continuing Resolution

May 19 – Suspension of Debt Limit Expires

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Bipartisan Housing Commission Endorses Rural Definition Fix

Yesterday, the Bipartisan Policy Center's Housing Commission - led by former Senator Kit Bond, former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, former Senator Mel Martinez, and former Senator George Mitchell - [released its recommendations](#) on the future of housing policy, with specific recommendations for USDA Rural Housing programs. In the past, the Bipartisan Policy Center's recommendations have become the basis of major housing reform legislation. If the past is any indication, therefore, these recommendations may see some attention from Capitol Hill.

Overall, the Commission's recommendations are supportive of NRHC's priorities. As you know, the NRHC Board and staff met with the Commissioners and their staff several times over the past year to provide feedback and comments as they drafted their proposal. Specifically, the Commission called on Congress to:

- Support USDA's unique role in supporting affordable housing by not combining it with HUD;
- Extend the Rural Definition until 2020 and maintain current law's 25,000 population cap;
- Modestly increase funding for the Section 502 Direct Loan program;
- Dedicate resources to improving capacity building and technology needed to modernize loan processing; and
- Increase Low-Income Housing Tax Credits by 50 percent.

At yesterday's press conference, former Senator Kit Bond repeatedly highlighted the unique nature of rural housing need and the importance of Rural Housing programs. Bond stated that despite their successful track record, rural housing programs were underfunded and deserved more attention from Congress.

Unfortunately, the Commission did cite some concerns about Rural Housing programs that we plan to respond to. The Commission called for an evaluation of Section 502 Direct underwriting in light of delinquency rates, and asked Congress to reconsider replacing the program's no down payment requirement with a minimum requirement.

Other aspects of the Commission's recommendations may be seen as more controversial. They call for winding down Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and replacing them with many private risk guarantors; limiting any government guarantee to only catastrophic loss, making this guarantee explicit, and

requiring fees to offset the cost of this guarantee; returning FHA to its original purpose of serving first-time homebuyers by decreasing loan limits; and refocusing rental assistance on those families with the most acute needs by transitioning from a lottery system to one that targets those earning less than 30 percent of the area median income.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Ask Your Representatives to Cosponsor HR 858

Yesterday, Rep. Fortenberry (R-NE) introduced [H.R. 858, the Rural Housing Preservation Act](#), to ensure that low-income families in over 900 rural communities will continue to have access to critical USDA Rural Housing programs. **Rep. Hinojosa (D-TX), Capito (R-WV), Courtney (D-CT), Womack (R-AR), and Walz (D-MN) have already signed on to be original cosponsors!**

Please ask your Representatives to co-sponsor H.R. 858!

Without Congressional action, more than 900 rural communities will lose eligibility for funding under critical USDA Rural Housing programs on March 27, 2013. At that time, USDA must revise its definition of "rural" -- for purposes of eligibility to USDA Rural Housing programs -- with data from the 2010 Census. In the past, Congress ensured that communities located within Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) remained eligible, as a condition to each new Census. Today, according to USDA's Economic Research Service, fully half of all rural residents live in small town and farming communities located in metro areas. *H.R. 858* will preserve eligibility for these communities by extending the current "rural" definition for 10 years, provided that each community has no more than 25,000 in population.

Here are some resources you can use:

- List of [Congressional targets](#) ;
- List of [Impacted Communities](#);
- [Rural Definition Fact Sheet](#); and
- Copy of [H.R. 858](#)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Updates on Appropriations and Rural Definition

House Passes FY13 Continuing Resolution

This Wednesday, the House passed a [Continuing Resolution \(CR\)](#) to keep the federal government funded for the remainder of FY13. This brings Congress one step closer to avoiding a government shutdown, when the existing CR expires on March 27. Notably, the House CR has several important implications for USDA Rural Housing programs and the Rural Definition.

While the House CR is set at FY12 Budget Authority levels, the bill uses FY13 subsidy rates. This may have a significant impact on program levels for Rural Housing Programs. For example, the program level for Section 502 Direct Loans will drop from \$900 million to \$720 million, as seen in the chart below:

Section 502 Direct	Program Levels
FY12 BA Rate 4.73%	\$900 Million
FY13 BA Rate 5.97%	\$720 Million
Section 504	
FY12 BA Rate 14.21%	\$10 Million
FY13 BA Rate 13.67%	\$7.32 Million
Section 515	
FY12 BA Rate 34.12%	\$64 Million
FY13 BA Rate 35.17%	\$62.5 Million
Section 514	
FY12 BA Rate 34.15%	\$27 Million
FY13 BA Rate 33.34%	\$26.9 Million

On a positive note, however, the CR includes language that we believe USDA can use to extend the current Rural Definition until the end of FY13 (September 30, 2012). This would provide rural communities with 6 more months of access to low-

cost loans, grants, and other assistance under critical USDA Rural Housing programs, as well as providing NRHC members with more time to urge their Representatives to cosponsor H.R. 858 for a long-term solution.

[Ask Your Representatives to Cosponsor H.R. 858!](#)

As you know, without Congressional action, more than 900 rural communities will lose eligibility for funding under critical USDA Rural Housing programs on March 27, 2013. That's why we're asking rural advocates to ask their Representatives to cosponsor H.R. 858, which would extend current law for 10 years.

So far, we're off to a great start! **22 Representatives** have joined Rep. Fortenberry to cosponsor [H.R. 858, the Rural Housing Preservation Act](#), including:

- Capito (R-WV)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Courtney (D-CT)
- Denham (R-CA)
- Farr (D-CA)
- Griffin (R-AR)
- Harper (R-MS)
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Jones (R-NC)
- Langevin (D-RI)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- Long (R-MO)
- McIntyre (D-NC)
- Michaud (D-ME)
- Neal (D-MA)
- Nunes (R-CA)
- Pastor (D-AZ)
- Pierluisi (D-PR)
- Valadao (R-CA)
- Walz (D-MN)
- Womack (R-AR)
- Young (R-AK)

But, we have a lot more ahead of us! If you haven't already, please use these resources to urge your Representatives to sign onto H.R. 858:

- List of [Congressional targets](#);
- List of [Impacted Communities](#);
- [Rural Definition Fact Sheet](#); and
- Copy of [H.R. 858](#).

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

FY13 CR, FY14 Budget Resolutions, Rural Definition

Update on FY13 Appropriations

The Senate is likely to pass its version of the FY13 Continuing Resolution (CR) bill (H.R. 933) next week to continue funding the government until the end of the fiscal year (September 30). At this moment, after the Senate acts, the House is expected to pass the Senate version of the CR in time to keep the government operating.

Under the Senate CR (see the chart below), USDA's budget -- like other federal agencies -- is subject to a 5 percent across-the-board sequestration cut, required by the Budget Control Act. In addition to the sequester, however, the Senate adds another 2.5 percent cut to the USDA budget

Nonetheless, the Senate bill is considerably better than what the House produced last summer, after the House Budget Committee called for very tight discretionary spending caps. As you may recall, the so-called "Ryan Budget" cut domestic discretionary by \$30 billion and transferred that to Defense. As you will see below, the House Budget Committee is at it again in FY14.

On a positive note, the Senate bill also includes an extension of the Rural Definition through the balance of the fiscal year for all communities that are currently eligible for rural housing programs.

RHS/RUS Programs	FY 12 Final	FY 13 Budget	FY 13 Senate	FY 13 House	FY13 Senate CR	FY13 House CR
502 Single Family Direct	900	653	900	653	900	720
502 Single Family Guaranteed	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
504 Housing Repair Loans	10	28	28	10.2	28	7.32
504 Housing Repair Grants	29.5	28.2	29.5	17	29.5	29.5
514 Farm Labor Housing Loans	20.8	26	26	21	25.6	26.9
515 Rural Rental Housing	64.5	0	28.4	31.3	31.3	62.5
516 Farm Labor Housing Grants	7.1	9	9	7	8.84	7.1

521 Rural Rental Assistance	904	907	907	886.6	907	904
523 Mutual Self-Help Housing TA Grants	30	10	30	15	30	30
533 Housing Preservation Grants	3.6	0	3.64	0	3.6	3.6
538 Rental Housing Guaranteed Loans	130	150	150	150	150	130
Multi-Family Restructuring* (Mandatory)	13	46.9	27.7	12.7	27.8	13
542 Preservation Demonstration Revolver	1	0	(16.7)	1.96	0	1
542 Voucher Demonstration	-11	(12.5)	(11)	10.8	(10)	(11)
Supervisory TA Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0
306 Community Facility Loans	1300	2,000	2,000	2,200	2,200	1300
306 Community Facility Grants	11.36	31	13	18	28.4	11.36
306 Community Facility Guarantee	105.7	0	0	57.5	57.5	946
Water-Wastewater Loans	730	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	730
Water-Wastewater Grants	351	411	425.7	411	425	351
Water-Wastewater Guarantee	70	0	60	0	636	70
Solid Waste Grants	3.4	4	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4
Small Systems Revolver	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	1	0.5
Rural Business Enterprise Grants	24.3	34	24	24	29.8	24.3
Rural Development Loan Fund/ Intermediary Re-lending Program (IRP)	17	19	19	17.7	19	17
306 Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI)	3.6	(13)*	6.121	3.5	6.12	3.6
Rural Microenterprise Investment Program	0	3.4	0	0	0	0

Status of FY14 Appropriations

While most of the focus this week has been on the Continuing Resolution, the House and Senate Budget Committees have each produced spending blueprints -- known as Budget Resolutions -- for FY14 and beyond.

For discretionary programs, the House Budget Resolution maintains the 10-year freeze on discretionary spending required under the Budget Control Act. However, the House Budget Resolution proposes \$1.1 trillion in cuts to domestic discretionary programs over 10 years. The House version also keeps in place sequestration cuts, but limits the across-the-board cuts only to domestic programs, which add \$700 billion in reduction over 10 years. The House Budget Resolution funds defense programs at \$560 billion, a substantial increase from FY13. Everything else -- from USDA to the FBI to the Department of Education -- will receive only \$500 billion in funding. If the sequester goes into effect, that number will fall by \$70 billion.

The Senate takes a different path. While the Senate's Budget Resolution continues the 10-year freeze on discretionary spending, it includes some spending reductions in mandatory accounts and \$975 billion in new tax revenue to offset the sequester. The Senate version also trims defense programs by \$24 billion over 10 years.

Because the paths the House and Senate Committees take are so far apart, it is hard to see how a compromise is reached. The House Budget Resolution squeezes domestic discretionary spending tremendously, despite the fact that it is already at the lowest rate -- as measured as a share of GDP -- since 1950. This will certainly steepen the slope that the House Appropriations Committee must climb, given how likely it is that nearly all Democrats and a few Republicans will oppose it.

[Keep Up the Great Work! Ask Your Representatives to Cosponsor H.R. 858!](#)

As of today, 40 Representatives have agreed to cosponsor [H.R. 858, the Rural Housing Preservation Act](#) to ensure that more than 900 rural communities can remain eligible for USDA Rural Housing programs! We're building momentum, but we need your help to get as many cosponsors as possible!

As noted above, the Senate Continuing Resolution includes an extension of the Rural Definition through the balance of the fiscal year for all communities that are currently eligible for rural housing programs. At this moment, the House is expected to pass the Senate version of the CR by March 27.

Help us build support for H.R. 858. Call your Representatives today!

You can use these materials to get started!

- List of [Congressional targets](#);
- List of [Impacted Communities](#);
- [Rural Definition Fact Sheet](#); and

- Copy of [H.R. 858](#).

So far, the following Representatives have agreed to be cosponsors:

- Barletta (R-PA)
- Brownley (D-CA)
- Capito (R-WV)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Courtney (D-CT)
- Denham (R-CA)
- Enyart (D-IL)
- Farr (D-CA)
- Fortenberry (R-NE)
- Gosar (R-AZ)
- Griffin (R-AR)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Harper (R-MS)
- Harris (R-MD)
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Jones (R-NC)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Langevin (D-RI)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- LoBiondo (R-NJ)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Long (R-MO)
- McGovern (D-MA)
- McIntyre (D-NC)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Michaud (D-ME)
- Neal (D-MA)
- Noem (R-SD)
- Nunes (R-CA)
- Pastor (D-AZ)
- Pearce (R-NM)
- Pierluisi (D-PR)
- Terry (R-NE)
- Thompson (D-MS)
- Valadao (R-CA)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Walz (D-MN)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Womack (R-AR)
- Young (R-AK)

We have a lot more work ahead of us!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Call For Submissions for NDC Academy Awards

Mary Mayer-Childs of the National Development Council asked that I remind NRHC members about submissions for the NDC Academy 2013 Awards. The **deadline is on Monday, March 18**, so there's still time to submit a one of your most challenging and creative projects. Remember, the NDC Academy is only a month away - April 16-18, 2013.

NDC Academy 2013 Awards recognize the country's most dedicated and innovative community development professionals and their work in four categories: **Creative Financing, Job Creation, Housing Development, Community Development**. If you win, you'll be able to exhibit your work at the Academy and on Capitol Hill. The projects that receive the most votes will win an NDC Academy 2013 Award (plus free tuition to an NDC course of your choice)!

For more information, you can visit NDCAcademy2013.org for all the details. The [Project Submission Instructions, Selection Criteria and Display Guidelines](#) will help you complete the online [Project Submission Form](#).

If you have any questions, you can also reach Mary at mchilds@nationaldevelopmentcouncil.org.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

CR Extends Rural Definition Through September 2013

Congress Extends Rural Definition Until September 30

Earlier this morning, Congress passed an FY13 Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government funded through the end of the fiscal year. The CR includes Section 731, which expressly extends eligibility for **all rural communities that are currently eligible until September 30, 2013.**

This gives rural advocates more time to build cosponsors for [H.R. 858, the Rural Housing Preservation Act](#). So, please remember to ask your Representatives to cosponsor this bill to ensure that more than 900 rural communities can remain eligible for USDA Rural Housing programs!

So far, more than 40 Representatives have agreed to be cosponsors:

- Barletta (R-PA)
- Brownley (D-CA)
- Capito (R-WV)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Courtney (D-CT)
- Crawford (R-AR)
- Denham (R-CA)
- Enyart (D-IL)
- Farr (D-CA)
- Fortenberry (R-NE)
- Gosar (R-AZ)
- Griffin (R-AR)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hanabusa (D-HI)
- Harper (R-MS)
- Harris (R-MD)
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Jones (R-NC)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Langevin (D-RI)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- LoBiondo (R-NJ)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Long (R-MO)
- McGovern (D-MA)
- McIntyre (D-NC)

- McNerney (D-CA)
- Michaud (D-ME)
- Neal (D-MA)
- Noem (R-SD)
- Nunes (R-CA)
- Pastor (D-AZ)
- Pearce (R-NM)
- Pierluisi (D-PR)
- Terry (R-NE)
- Thompson (D-MS)
- Valadao (R-CA)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Walz (D-MN)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Womack (R-AR)
- Young (R-AK)

We have a lot more work ahead of us!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

FY14 Rural Housing Appropriations

Ask Your Representative to Support FY14 Rural Housing Funding TODAY!

This morning, Rep. Hinojosa (D-TX) issued a Dear Colleague letter in support of FY14 Appropriations for USDA Rural Housing programs. **Call your Representatives TODAY and ask them to co-sign this [Dear Colleague letter](#) by the April 1st deadline!**

The House Appropriations Committee is the first step in the FY14 process and the Agriculture Subcommittee is usually one of the first to mark up their bill. We need as many Representatives -- both Democrats and Republicans -- to sign on in support of Rep. Hinojosa's letter. The timeframe is tight, so please make your calls as soon as possible.

As with every year, Appropriations in the House will be especially challenging. The House Budget Resolution reduces domestic discretionary spending by another 18 percent and shifts the FY14 sequester required by the Budget Control Act away from defense programs and onto domestic programs.

So, when you call your Representatives, tell them why these programs are so critical to our communities. USDA's rural housing programs expand access to clean, decent, and affordable homeownership and rental housing opportunities for our nation's most vulnerable low-income rural residents: seniors, low-income families, persons with disabilities, and seasonal and migrant farmworkers. For many rural communities, USDA's low-cost loans, grants, and other assistance are often their *only source* of federal housing funding. Despite serving families with limited economic means, these programs are among the most cost-effective federal housing programs.

Congressional staff should contact Holly Bullard in Rep. Hinojosa's office to sign on.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Update on Rural Definition, Appropriations

USDA Issued Administrative Notice on Rural Definition

Earlier today, USDA issued an [Administrative Notice](#) (AN) to provide guidance to all local USDA offices on the impact of the FY13 Continuing Resolution (CR) on the Rural Definition issue. As you know, the CR extended eligibility for all communities that are currently eligible for USDA Rural Housing program until the end of the fiscal year (September 30, 2013).

The AN clearly instructs USDA staff that "until that time, and unless specifically authorized, the RHS programs are instructed to use the data from the 2000 Decennial Census for program eligibility purposes."

As a result, completed applications on hand by the close of business on September 30, 2013 will be processed using the current Rural Definition, provided that the applications are obligated by December 31, 2013. If an application cannot be obligated by December 31, 2013, concurrence must be obtained from the appropriate Agency's Administrator to continue with the processing using 2000 Census data.

Next Week is the 27th Annual National Community Development Week!

Starting on April 1st, communities across the nation will be celebrating the 27th Annual National Community Development Week, which brings together community leaders, government officials, and nonprofit organizations in support of HUD's CDBG and HOME programs.

National Community Development Week is organized by a coalition of national organizations -- including NRHC -- to raise awareness of how important CDBG and HOME are to our communities.

To participate, organizations are encouraged to invite their Representatives and Senators (and their staff) to visit projects in their districts that used CDBG or HOME funds, and to meet the people who benefit from these important programs.

FY14 Rural Housing Appropriations

We are under a tight deadline, so please **call your Representatives TODAY, TOMORROW, or MONDAY and ask them to co-sign Rep. Hinojosa's [Dear Colleague letter](#) by the April 1st deadline!**

So far, we have 5 cosigners:

- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Negrete McLeod (D-CA)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Lujan (D-NM) and
- Bonamici (D-OR)

Congressional staff should contact Holly Bullard in Rep. Hinojosa's office to sign on.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Deadline Extended to April 5

Appropriations Deadline Extended to April 5

Rep. Hinojosa (D-TX) has decided to extend the deadline to sign onto his [Dear Colleague letter](#) in support of FY14 Rural Housing Appropriations. **The new deadline is April 5th!**

This week, please call your Representatives and ask them to sign on! We are counting on you to call your Representatives and urge them to sign on in support of these appropriation requests!

So far, we have 10 cosigners:

- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Negrete McLeod (D-CA); and
- Watt (D-NC)

If your Representative signed on last year, ask them to support Rural Housing programs again in FY14: Blumenauer (D-OR), Bordallo (D-GU), Brown (D-FL), Castor (D-FL), Clay (D-MO), Costa (D-CA), DeFazio (D-OR), Engel (D-NY), Garamendi (D-CA), Green (D-TX), Keating (D-MA), Larsen (D-WA), McNerney (D-CA), Pierluisi (D-PR), Pingree (D-ME), Sablan (D-MP), Schrader (D-OR), Thompson (D-MS), Welch (D-VT), Wilson (D-FL).

Congressional staff should contact Holly Bullard in Rep. Hinojosa's office to sign on.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Rural Housing, HOME, CDBG, Oh My!

FY14 Rural Housing Funding

So far, 14 Representatives have signed onto Rep. Hinojosa's (D-TX) [Dear Colleague letter](#) in support of FY14 Rural Housing Appropriations. Remember, **the new deadline is April 5th**, so we only have a few more days to build as much support as possible.

Have you called your Representatives?

The 14 cosigners include:

- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- Negrete McLeod (D-CA)
- Sewell (D-AL) and
- Watt (D-NC)

It's important to call your Representatives, especially if they signed on in support of Rural Housing Appropriations last year: Blumenauer (D-OR), Bordallo (D-GU), Brown (D-FL), Castor (D-FL), Clay (D-MO), Costa (D-CA), DeFazio (D-OR), Engel (D-NY), Garamendi (D-CA), Green (D-TX), McNerney (D-CA), Pierluisi (D-PR), Pingree (D-ME), Sablan (D-MP), Schrader (D-OR), Thompson (D-MS), Welch (D-VT), Wilson (D-FL).

Congressional staff should contact Holly Bullard at holly.bullard@mail.house.gov in Rep. Hinojosa's office to sign on.

FY14 Community Development Block Grants

This year, a bipartisan group of 6 Representatives, including Republicans Rep. Barletta (R-PA), Rep. King (R-NY), and Rep. Gibson (R-NY) and Democrats Rep. Brady (D-PA), Rep. McGovern (D-MA), and Rep. Cleaver (D-MO), released a [Dear Colleague letter](#) in support for \$3.3 billion in formula funding for the Community Development Block Grant.

Ask your Representatives to sign on in support of FY14 CDBG Appropriations! Use NRHC's Factsheet on [Rural CDBG Success Stories](#) to show how CDBG helps spur homeownership, housing rehabilitation, public improvements, public services, and economic development projects in rural communities.

Congressional staff should contact Kate Ostrander at kate.ostrander@mail.house.gov before the April 10th deadline.

FY14 HOME Investment Partnerships

Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH) has issued a [Dear Colleague letter](#) in support of at least \$1.6 billion in FY14 HOME program appropriations. **Remember to call your Representatives, and ask them to sign on in support of this critical funding.**

Be sure to share with them NRHC's HOME resources, including: [State-by-State HOME data](#) and our Factsheet on [Rural HOME Success Stories](#).

The deadline to sign on is April 9th. Congressional staff should reach out to Kyle Williams at kyle.williams@mail.house.gov in Rep. Fudge's office.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Keep Up The Great Work!

FY14 Rural Housing Funding

Thanks to your hard work, we now have 24 Representatives who have signed onto Rep. Hinojosa's (D-TX) [Dear Colleague letter](#) in support of FY14 Rural Housing Appropriations. Remember, **the deadline is TOMORROW, April 5th!**
So, CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES TODAY!

The 24 cosigners include:

- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Brown (D-FL)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Castor (D-FL)
- Clay (D-MO)
- Costa (D-CA)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- Matsui (D-CA)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Negrete McLeod (D-CA)
- Sewell (D-AL)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Wilson (D-FL)

It's important to call your Representatives TODAY, especially if they signed on in support of Rural Housing Appropriations last year: Bordallo (D-GU), DeFazio (D-OR), Engel (D-NY), Garamendi (D-CA), Green (D-TX), Pierluisi (D-PR), Sablan (D-MP), Schrader (D-OR), and Thompson (D-MS).

Congressional staff should contact Holly Bullard at holly.bullard@mail.house.gov in Rep. Hinojosa's office to sign on.

FY14 Community Development Block Grants

34 Representatives have signed onto a [Dear Colleague letter](#) in support for \$3.3 billion in formula funding for the Community Development Block Grant. The letter was issued by a bipartisan group of 6 Representatives, including Republicans Rep. Barletta (R-PA), Rep. King (R-NY), and Rep. Gibson (R-NY) and Democrats Rep. Brady (D-PA), Rep. McGovern (D-MA), and Rep. Cleaver (D-MO).

The 34 Representatives include:

- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Cicilline (D-RI)
- Conyers (D-MI)
- DeLauro (D-CT)
- Dingell (D-MI)
- Gene Green (D-TX)
- Higgins (D-NY)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Kind (D-WI)
- Levin (D-MI)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- McCarthy (D-NY)
- Michaud (D-ME)
- Nadler (D-NY)
- Napolitano (D-CA)
- Pascrell (D-NJ)
- Pingree (D-ME)
- Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
- Schakowsky (D-IL)
- Slaughter (D-NY)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Yarmouth (D-KY)

Ask your Representatives to sign on in support of FY14 CDBG Appropriations! Use NRHC's Factsheet on [Rural CDBG Success Stories](#) to show how CDBG helps spur homeownership, housing rehabilitation, public

improvements, public services, and economic development projects in rural communities.

Congressional staff should contact Kate Ostrander at kate.ostrander@mail.house.gov before the April 10th deadline.

FY14 HOME Investment Partnerships

Also, remember to call your Representatives, and ask them to sign onto Rep. Fudge's (D-OH) [Dear Colleague letter](#) in support of at least \$1.6 billion in FY14 HOME program appropriations.

Be sure to share with them NRHC's HOME resources, including: [State-by-State HOME data](#) and our Factsheet on [Rural HOME Success Stories](#).

The deadline to sign on is April 9th. Congressional staff should reach out to Kyle Williams at kyle.williams@mail.house.gov in Rep. Fudge's office.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Deadline Extended to April 12

Rural Housing Appropriations Deadline Extended to April 12th

Because the House Appropriations Committee decided to push back the deadline for Appropriations Requests until after the President releases his FY14 Budget Request, Rep. Hinojosa has decided to extend the deadline to sign onto his [Dear Colleague letter](#) in support of rural housing programs! **The new deadline is Friday, April 12th!**

This gives rural advocates even more time to build support for Rural Housing appropriations! We already have 30 cosigners, so let's keep up the pressure!

The 30 cosigners include:

- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Brown (D-FL)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Castor (D-FL)
- Christenson (D-VI)
- Clay (D-MO)
- Cleaver (D-MO)
- Costa (D-CA)
- Enyart (D-IL)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Langevin (D-RI)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- Matsui (D-CA)
- McIntyre (D-NC)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Negrete McLeod (D-CA)
- Sewell (D-AL)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Vela (D-TX)

- Watt (D-NC)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Wilson (D-FL)

It's important to call your Representatives, especially if they signed on in support of Rural Housing Appropriations last year: Bordallo (D-GU), DeFazio (D-OR), Engel (D-NY), Garamendi (D-CA), Green (D-TX), Pierluisi (D-PR), Sablan (D-MP), Schrader (D-OR), and Thompson (D-MS).

Congressional staff should contact Holly Bullard at holly.bullard@mail.house.gov in Rep. Hinojosa's office to sign on.

CDBG Dear Colleague Extended Until April 17th

For the same reasons, [CDBG Dear Colleague Letter](#) has been pushed back to **Wednesday, April 17th!**

HOME Dear Colleague

I have not yet heard what the new deadline is for the [HOME Dear Colleague letter](#), but I will let everyone know as soon as it is available.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

39 Cosigners!

Rural Housing Appropriations

We have one more week to build as much support as possible for Rep. Hinojosa's [Dear Colleague letter](#) for rural housing appropriations. The deadline for Representatives to sign on is this Friday, April 12th!

Let's keep up the pressure! We already have 39 cosigners, including:

- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Brown (D-FL)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Castor (D-FL)
- Christenson (D-VI)
- Clay (D-MO)
- Cleaver (D-MO)
- Costa (D-CA)
- DeFazio (D-OR)
- DelBene (D-OR)
- Enyart (D-IL)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hanabusa (D-HI)
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Kirkpatrick (D-AZ)
- Langevin (D-RI)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- Lynch (D-MA)
- Matsui (D-CA)
- McIntyre (D-NC)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Negrete McLeod (D-CA)
- Nolan (D-MN)
- Pierluisi (D-PR)
- Sewell (D-AL)

- Shea-Porter (D-NH)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Vela (D-TX)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Wilson (D-FL)
- Young (R-AK)

It's important to call your Representatives, especially if they signed on in support of Rural Housing Appropriations last year: Bordallo (D-GU), Engel (D-NY), Garamendi (D-CA), Green (D-TX), Sablan (D-MP), Schrader (D-OR), and Thompson (D-MS).

Congressional staff should contact Holly Bullard at holly.bullard@mail.house.gov in Rep. Hinojosa's office to sign on.

CDBG Appropriations

So far, 44 Representatives have signed onto the [CDBG Dear Colleague Letter](#). The deadline for Representatives to sign on is **Wednesday, April 17th!**

- Brady (D-PA)
- Barletta (R-PA)
- McGovern (D-MA)
- King (R-NY)
- Cleaver (D-MO)
- Gibson (R-NY)
- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Cicilline (D-RI)
- Conyers (D-MI)
- DeLauro (D-CT)
- Dingell (D-MI)
- Doyle (D-PA)
- Engel (D-NY)
- Gene Green (D-TX)
- Higgins (D-NY)
- Holt (D-NJ)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Kind (D-WI)
- Levin (D-MI)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)

- McCarthy (D-NY)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Meeks (D-NY)
- Michaud (D-ME)
- Nadler (D-NY)
- Napolitano (D-CA)
- Pascrell (D-NJ)
- Pierluisi (D-PR)
- Pingree (D-ME)
- Rangel (D-NY)
- Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
- Rush (D-IL)
- Loretta Sanchez (D-CA)
- Schakowsky (D-IL)
- Scott (D-VA)
- Slaughter (D-NY)
- Tonko (D-NY)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Vela (D-CA)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Yarmuth (D-KY)

HOME Appropriations

The HOME Coalition is still working to extend the deadline is for the [HOME Dear Colleague letter](#). Please, continue to reach out to your Representatives, and ask them to support FY14 Appropriations for the HOME program. So far, 24 Representatives have signed on:

- DeLauro (D-CT)
- Pascrell (D-NJ)
- Pingree (D-ME)
- Conyers (D-MI)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Lewis (D-GA)
- Jackson Lee (D-TX)
- McCarthy (D-NY)
- Bonamici (D-OR)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Schakowsky (D-IL)
- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Vela (D-TX)
- Hanabusa (D-HI)
- Cummings (D-MD)

- Capps (D-CA)
- Ciciline (D-RI)
- Hastings (D-FL)
- Wilson (D-FL)
- Cardenas (D-CA)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Carson (D-IN)
- Payne (D-NJ)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

We're Up To 48 Cosigners

President Obama's FY14 Budget Request

Later this morning, the White House will release the President's FY14 Budget Request. As soon as we can, we will send out an update and analysis of its impact on USDA Rural Housing, HOME, CDBG, and other key programs.

Rural Housing Appropriations

Thanks to your hard work, we now have 48 cosigners to Rep. Hinojosa's [Dear Colleague letter](#) for rural housing appropriations! We've already surpassed the number from last year (38), and we are still going strong! Remember, the deadline is this Friday, April 12th, so make your calls today!

The 48 cosigners include:

- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Bordallo (D-GU)
- Brown (D-FL)
- Brownley (D-CA)
- Bustos (D-IL)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Castor (D-FL)
- Christenson (D-VI)
- Clay (D-MO)
- Cleaver (D-MO)
- Costa (D-CA)
- DeFazio (D-OR)
- DelBene (D-OR)
- Enyart (D-IL)
- Green, Al (D-TX)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hanabusa (D-HI)
- Hastings (D-
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Huffman (D-CA)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Keating (D-MA)

- Kirkpatrick (D-AZ)
- Langevin (D-RI)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- Lynch (D-MA)
- Matsui (D-CA)
- McIntyre (D-NC)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Negrete McLeod (D-CA)
- Nolan (D-MN)
- Pierluisi (D-PR)
- Sewell (D-AL)
- Shea-Porter (D-NH)
- Takano (D-CA)
- Thompson (D-MS)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Vela (D-TX)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Wilson (D-FL)
- Young (R-AK)

Plus, Rep. Michaud (D-ME) is submitting a personal request, instead of signing onto the Dear Colleague letter.

It's important to call your Representatives, especially if they signed on in support of Rural Housing Appropriations last year: Engel (D-NY), Garamendi (D-CA), Sablan (D-MP), and Schrader (D-OR).

Congressional staff should contact Holly Bullard at holly.bullard@mail.house.gov in Rep. Hinojosa's office to sign on.

CDBG Appropriations

So far, 83 Representatives have signed onto the [CDBG Dear Colleague Letter](#). The deadline for Representatives to sign on is **Wednesday, April 17th!**

- Brady (D-PA)
- Barletta (R-PA)
- McGovern (D-MA)
- King (R-NY)
- Cleaver (D-MO)
- Gibson (R-NY)
- Beatty (D-OH)

- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Braley (D-IA)
- Brown (D-FL)
- Brownley (D-CA)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Carson (D-IN)
- Chu (D-CA)
- Cicilline (D-RI)
- Clarke (NY)
- Clay (D-MO)
- Cohen (D-TN)
- Connelly (D-VA)
- Conyers (D-MI)
- Davis (IL)
- Davis (D-CA)
- DeLauro (D-CT)
- Dingell (D-MI)
- Doggett (D-TX)
- Doyle (D-PA)
- Engel (D-NY)
- Esty (D-CT)
- Gene Green (D-TX)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hahn (D-CA)
- Hastings (D-FL)
- Higgins (D-NY)
- Holt (D-NJ)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Johnson, Eddie Bernice (D-TX)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Kennedy (D-MA)
- Kind (D-WI)
- Langevin (D-RI)
- Levin (D-MI)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lowenthal (D-CA)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- Lynch (D-MA)
- Maloney, Carolyn (D-NY)
- Markey (D-MA)
- Matheson (D-UT)
- McCarthy (D-NY)
- McLeod (

- McNerney (D-CA)
- Meeks (D-NY)
- Michaud (D-ME)
- Moore (D-WI)
- Nadler (D-NY)
- Napolitano (D-CA)
- Pascrell (D-NJ)
- Payne, Jr (D-NJ)
- Peterson (D-MN)
- Pierluisi (D-PR)
- Pingree (D-ME)
- Polis (D-CO)
- Rangel (D-NY)
- Richmond (D-LA)
- Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
- Rush (D-IL)
- Sanchez, Loretta (D-CA)
- Schakowsky (D-IL)
- Scott (D-VA)
- Shea-Porter (D-NH)
- Sires (D-NJ)
- Slaughter (D-NY)
- Tonko (D-NY)
- Tsongas (D-MA)
- Turner (R-OH)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Vela (D-CA)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Yarmuth (D-KY)

HOME Appropriations

The deadline for the [HOME Dear Colleague letter](#) has been extended to April 16th! Please, continue to reach out to your Representatives, and ask them to support FY14 Appropriations for the HOME program. So far, 24 Representatives have signed on:

- DeLauro (D-CT)
- Pascrell (D-NJ)
- Pingree (D-ME)
- Conyers (D-MI)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Lewis (D-GA)
- Jackson Lee (D-TX)
- McCarthy (D-NY)

- Bonamici (D-OR)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Schakowsky (D-IL)
- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Vela (D-TX)
- Hanabusa (D-HI)
- Cummings (D-MD)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Ciciline (D-RI)
- Hastings (D-FL)
- Wilson (D-FL)
- Cardenas (D-CA)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Carson (D-IN)
- Payne (D-NJ)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

One Day Left!

TOMORROW is the deadline for Rep. Hinojosa's [Dear Colleague letter](#) for rural housing appropriations! Given the President's budget, it is even more important that we build support for these programs in Congress! CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES TODAY AND TOMORROW!

As of today, we have 49 cosigners, including:

- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Bordallo (D-GU)
- Brown (D-FL)
- Brownley (D-CA)
- Bustos (D-IL)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Castor (D-FL)
- Christenson (D-VI)
- Clay (D-MO)
- Cleaver (D-MO)
- Costa (D-CA)
- DeFazio (D-OR)
- DelBene (D-WA)
- Enyart (D-IL)
- Green, Al (D-TX)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hanabusa (D-HI)
- Hastings (D-
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Huffman (D-CA)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Kirkpatrick (D-AZ)
- Kuster (D-NH)
- Langevin (D-RI)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- Lynch (D-MA)
- Matsui (D-CA)

- McIntyre (D-NC)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Negrete McLeod (D-CA)
- Nolan (D-MN)
- Pierluisi (D-PR)
- Sewell (D-AL)
- Shea-Porter (D-NH)
- Takano (D-CA)
- Thompson (D-MS)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Vela (D-TX)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Wilson (D-FL)
- Young (R-AK)

Plus, Rep. Michaud (D-ME) is submitting a personal request, instead of signing onto the Dear Colleague letter.

It's important to call your Representatives, especially if they signed on in support of Rural Housing Appropriations last year: Engel (D-NY), Garamendi (D-CA), Sablan (D-MP), and Schrader (D-OR).

Congressional staff should contact Holly Bullard at holly.bullard@mail.house.gov in Rep. Hinojosa's office to sign on.

HOME Appropriations

The deadline for the [HOME Dear Colleague letter](#) has been extended to April 16th! So far, 57 Representatives have signed on:

- Beatty (D-OH)
- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Bordallo (D-GU)
- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Brownley (D-CA)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Cardenas (D-CA)
- Carson (D-IN)
- Ciciline (D-RI)
- Clarke (D-NY)
- Cohen (D-TN)
- Connelly (D-VA)
- Conyers (D-MI)
- Cummings (D-MD)
- Davis (D-CA)

- Davis, Danny (D-IL)
- Doggett (D-TX)
- DeLauro (D-CT)
- Ellison (D-MN)
- Engel (D-NY)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hanabusa (D-HI)
- Hahn (D-CA)
- Hastings (D-FL)
- Huffman (D-CA)
- Jackson Lee (D-TX)
- Johnson, Eddie Bernice (D-TX)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Langevin (D-RI)
- Lewis (D-GA)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lynch (D-MA)
- McCarthy (D-NY)
- McGovern (D-MA)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- O'Rourke (D-TX)
- Pascrell (D-NJ)
- Payne (D-NJ)
- Pingree (D-ME)
- Pocan (D-WI)
- Rangel (D-NY)
- Ruiz (D-CA)
- Sarbanes (D-MD)
- Schakowsky (D-IL)
- Scott (D-VA)
- Sires (D-NJ)
- Takano (D-CA)
- Tierney (D-MA)
- Tsongas (D-MA)
- Vela (D-TX)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Veasley (D-TX)
- Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Walz (D-MN)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Wilson (D-FL)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

NRHC Strongly Opposes President's FY14 Budget

NRHC Strongly Opposes the President's FY14 Budget

Earlier today, NRHC delivered a letter to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack expressing [extreme disappointment and opposition](#) to the President's FY14 Budget Request for Rural Development (RD) programs, and accusing USDA of ultimately seeking to eliminate Rural Housing and Rural Water/Sewer programs.

Between 2010 and 2013, the RD Budget Authority was cut by \$750 million, representing 19 percent of USDA's overall reduction in discretionary spending for the same period. Now, the President's Budget proposes an additional \$200 million in cuts, despite more than \$300 million in savings from USDA loan programs.

If the President's Budget is approved, Rural Development programs will have been cut by more than \$1 billion in just 4 years!

For rural advocates, this is nothing short of outrageous. While we're starting to get the message to Capitol Hill and will be sending out a press release to nearly 1,000 rural reporters on Monday, we need your help to raise awareness of how the President's budget will impact rural families:

- **Share [NRHC's Letter](#) On Facebook Or Twitter;**
- **Use our [Press Release](#) To Call Your Local Media;**
- **Call Your Representatives and Senators and Urge Them To Protect Rural Housing Programs; and**
- **Ask 10 Other Rural Organizations To Do The Same!**

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Last Day To Collect Signatures

TODAY is the deadline for Rep. Hinojosa's [Dear Colleague letter](#) in support of rural housing appropriations! Thanks to all of your hard work, we have 53 cosigners! If your Representative hasn't signed on yet, please give them **ONE MORE CALL!** If your Representative did sign on, please call them to thank them for their support!

- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Bordallo (D-GU)
- Brown (D-FL)
- Brownley (D-CA)
- Bustos (D-IL)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Cartwright (D-PA)
- Castor (D-FL)
- Christenson (D-VI)
- Clay (D-MO)
- Cleaver (D-MO)
- Costa (D-CA)
- Davis (D-IL)
- DeFazio (D-OR)
- DelBene (D-WA)
- Enyart (D-IL)
- Green, Al (D-TX)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hanabusa (D-HI)
- Hastings (D-FL)
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Huffman (D-CA)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Kirkpatrick (D-AZ)
- Kuster (D-NH)
- Langevin (D-RI)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- Lynch (D-MA)

- Matsui (D-CA)
- McIntyre (D-NC)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Negrete McLeod (D-CA)
- Nolan (D-MN)
- Pierluisi (D-PR)
- Pocan (D-WI)
- Ruiz (D-CA)
- Sewell (D-AL)
- Shea-Porter (D-NH)
- Takano (D-CA)
- Thompson (D-MS)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Vela (D-TX)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Wilson (D-FL)
- Young (R-AK)

Plus, Rep. Michaud (D-ME) is submitting a personal request.

It's important to call your Representatives, especially if they signed on in support of Rural Housing Appropriations last year: Engel (D-NY), Garamendi (D-CA), Sablan (D-MP), and Schrader (D-OR).

Congressional staff should contact Holly Bullard at holly.bullard@mail.house.gov in Rep. Hinojosa's office to sign on.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

House Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing

House Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing

Earlier today, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture -- which appropriates Rural Housing funding -- held a [hearing to discuss the Administration's FY14 Agriculture Budget Request with USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack](#). While most of hearing focused on [other issues](#), Secretary Vilsack and Members of the Subcommittee discussed important issues impacting Rural Development programs.

According to Secretary Vilsack, USDA's budget is now \$1 billion below its 2009 levels due to budget cuts and more than \$750 million in savings. Going forward, one of USDA's highest priorities will be to contract directly with 3rd parties to reduce workload. USDA has 5,000 fewer staff, but the Department has been asked to provide an increased level of service to rural communities.

Rep. Lowey (D-NY) and Rep. DeLauro (D-CT) expressed deep concern for the impact of sequestration on USDA Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance. When USDA runs out of funding in August or September of this year, an estimated 15,000 rural families will no longer be able to access Rental Assistance. Secretary Vilsack noted that some rental properties may face foreclosure without assistance from USDA.

Rep. Pingree (D-ME) asked about the significant cuts to Rural Water/Sewer Grants. Secretary Vilsack argued that lower interest rates would make Rural Water/Sewer loans more appealing to smaller communities. Vilsack also noted that USDA has been meeting with investment banks and corporate investors to find ways to encourage investment in rural projects, like Water/Sewer.

While USDA does not currently plan to furlough employees, Secretary Vilsack noted that any furloughs would occur in Rural Development and FSA offices.

63 Reps Sign Onto Rural Housing Appropriations!

Because of your hard work, a total of 63 Representatives signed onto Rep. Hinojosa's Dear Colleague letter, in support of Rural Housing funds. Two additional Representatives -- Rep. Pearce (R-NM) and Rep. Michaud (D-ME) -- will submit individual appropriations requests, instead of signing onto the joint letter.

This is a tremendous success! Last year, 38 Representatives signed onto the Dear Colleague letter! Let's keep this momentum going as we turn out attention to the Senate! We expect Sen. Schumer (D-NY) will issue a Dear Colleague letter in support of Rural Housing programs later this week. We will have another tight deadline, so as soon as the letter is out, we'll ask NRHC members to contact their Senators and ask them to cosign the Dear Colleague letter. Stay tuned for more details.

The final list of cosigners include:

- Blumenauer (D-OR)
- Bonamici (D-OR)
- Bordallo (D-GU)
- Brown (D-FL)
- Brownley (D-CA)
- Bustos (D-IL)
- Butterfield (D-NC)
- Capps (D-CA)
- Cartwright (D-PA)
- Castor (D-FL)
- Christenson (D-VI)
- Clay (D-MO)
- Cleaver (D-MO)
- Costa (D-CA)
- Davis (D-IL)
- DeFazio (D-OR)
- DelBene (D-WA)
- Ellison (D-MN)
- Enyart (D-IL)
- Gabbard (D-HI)
- Gallego (D-TX)
- Garamendi (D-CA)
- Green, Al (D-TX)
- Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Hanabusa (D-HI)
- Hastings (D-FL)
- Heck (D-WA)
- Hinojosa (D-TX)
- Holt (D-NJ)
- Huffman (D-CA)
- Johnson (D-GA)
- Keating (D-MA)
- Kirkpatrick (D-AZ)
- Kilmer (D-WA)
- Kuster (D-NH)

- Langevin (D-RI)
- Larsen (D-WA)
- Loeb sack (D-IA)
- Lujan (D-NM)
- Lujan Grisholm (D-NM)
- Lynch (D-MA)
- Matsui (D-CA)
- McGovern (D-MA)
- McIntyre (D-NC)
- McNerney (D-CA)
- Negrete McLeod (D-CA)
- Nolan (D-MN)
- Pierluisi (D-PR)
- Pocan (D-WI)
- Ruiz (D-CA)
- Sablan (D-MP)
- Schakowski (D-IL)
- Schrader (D-OR)
- Sewell (D-AL)
- Shea-Porter (D-NH)
- Takano (D-CA)
- Thompson (D-MS)
- Vargas (D-CA)
- Vela (D-TX)
- Watt (D-NC)
- Welch (D-VT)
- Wilson (D-FL)
- Young (R-AK)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

House THUD Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing

House THUD Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing

This morning, the House THUD Appropriations Subcommittee -- which provides funding to HOME, CDBG, Section 8, and other key programs -- held a hearing to discuss the President's [FY14 THUD Budget Request](#) with HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan.

While the FY14 Budget Request proposes further cuts to CDBG and HOME, other programs -- like Housing Counseling, Choice Neighborhoods, Neighborhood Stabilization, and Section 108 CDBG Loan Guarantees -- would be significantly increased. Secretary Donovan argued that these programs produce better outcomes with limited funds because they are more targeted to hardest hit neighborhoods and require more private capital leveraging.

Secretary Donovan also discussed the shortfall in loan authority for multi-family housing program. Unless Congress acts, HUD will run out of loan authority for multi-family housing loans later this year. They are asking Congress for an addition \$5 billion in loan authority, which they say will bring in \$200 million in profits for taxpayers. A similar problem happened earlier this year with Indian Housing loans.

The President's Budget would also provide \$75 million to the Office of Economic Resiliency, a multi-agency partnership between HUD, the Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency that helps to coordinate comprehensive housing and transportation initiatives.

Finally, Secretary Donovan discussed the impacts of Sequestration. With Sequestration, 125,000 families will lose their housing vouchers.

Senate HOME Appropriations

Senator Leahy (D-VT) and Senator Coons (D-DE) are sponsoring the [Senate Dear Colleague letter in support of HOME funding](#). Please remember to call your Senators and ask them to support HOME funding! The deadline to sign on is Tuesday, April 23.

Meanwhile, Rep. Fudge's (D-OH) House Dear Colleague letter closes today, with a total of 72 cosigners!

Senate CDBG Appropriations

[Senator Leahy's CDBG Dear Colleague letter](#) for the Senate is now out! Please, call your Senators and urge them to protect CDBG funding! The deadline for your Senators to sign on is Tuesday, April 23. Senate staff can contact Lauren Brackett at Lauren_Brackett@leahy.senate.gov.

So far, 3 Senators have signed on:

- Leahy (D-VT)
- Schumer (D-NY)
- Casey (D-PA)

As you know, today is the last day for Representatives to sign onto the House Dear Colleague letter in support of CDBG funding. So far, 134 Representatives have signed on.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Ask Your Senators To Protect Rural Housing Programs

Today, Sen. Schumer (D-NY) released his [Dear Colleague letter in support of FY14 Rural Housing Appropriations](#)! We have a very short turn-around time, so please, **CALL YOUR SENATORS TODAY!**

As you know, the President's disappointing Budget Request for Rural Housing programs only makes it more important to build as much support as possible for these critical programs in Congress. In the House, 63 Representatives signed onto Rep. Hinojosa's letter to the House Appropriations Committee in support of Rural Housing. Now we need your help in the Senate!

While it's important to call all of your Senators, a good place to start is with those who signed on last year: Bennet (D-CO), Boxer (D-CA), Carper (D-DE), Coons (D-DE), Durbin (D-IL), Franken (D-MN), Gillbrand (D-NY), Harkin (D-IA), Johnson (D-SD), Leahy (D-VT), Levin (D-MI), Merkley (D-OR), Sanders (D-VT), Shaheen (D-NH), Tester (D-MT), and Wyden (D-OR).

Other Senators who made individual requests on Rural Housing Appropriations in 2012 include: Boozman (R-AR), Hagan (D-NC), Kerry (D-MA), and Murray (D-WA). Senator Pryor (D-AR) made a request in 2012, and is now the Chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. Sen. Feinstein (D-CA) is also a member of this Subcommittee.

The deadline for your Senators to sign on is Tuesday, April 23. Senate staff can reach out to Lane Bodian (lane_bodian@schumer.senate.gov).

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Tomorrow is the Last Day to Call Your Senators

The deadline for Senators to sign onto Sen. Schumer's (D-NY) [Dear Colleague letter in support of FY14 Rural Housing Appropriations](#) is **TOMORROW, April 23. Please, call your Senators TODAY and TOMORROW.** We have a lot of work ahead of us!

So far, 8 Senators have signed on, including:

- Carper (D-DE)
- Harkin (D-IA)
- Hirono (D-HI)
- Leahy (D-VT)
- Levin (D-MI)
- Manchin (D-WV)
- Sanders (D-VT) and
- Schumer (D-NY)

While its important to call all of your Senators, a good place to start is with those who signed on last year: Bennet (D-CO), Boxer (D-CA), Coons (D-DE), Durbin (D-IL), Franken (D-MN), Gillbrand (D-NY), Johnson (D-SD), Merkley (D-OR), Shaheen (D-NH), Tester (D-MT), and Wyden (D-OR).

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The deadline for your Senators to sign on is TOMORROW, Tuesday, April 23. Senate staff can reach out to Lane Bodian (lane_bodian@schumer.senate.gov).

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Final Day to Call Your Senators

Today is the **last day** that Senators can sign onto Sen. Schumer's (D-NY) [Dear Colleague letter in support of FY14 Rural Housing Appropriations](#).

Please call your Senators TODAY, explain to them why rural housing programs are critical to your communities, and ask them to sign onto the letter. Senate staff can reach out to Lane Bodian (lane_bodian@schumer.senate.gov) to sign on.

So far, 12 Senators have signed on, including:

- Brown (D-OH)
- Carper (D-DE)
- Gillibrand (D-NY)
- Harkin (D-IA)
- Hirono (D-HI)
- Landrieu (D-LA)
- Leahy (D-VT)
- Levin (D-MI)
- Manchin (D-WV)
- Sanders (D-VT)
- Schumer (D-NY) and
- Tester (D-MT)

Senators who signed on last year, include: Bennet (D-CO), Boxer (D-CA), Coons (D-DE), Durbin (D-IL), Franken (D-MN), Johnson (D-SD), Merkley (D-OR), Shaheen (D-NH), and Wyden (D-OR).

Other Senators who made individual requests in 2012 include: Boozman (R-AR), Hagan (D-NC), and Murray (D-WA). Senator Pryor (D-AR) made a request in 2012, and is now the Chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. Sen. Feinstein (D-CA) is also a member of this Subcommittee.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Deadline Extended Until Wed April 24

The deadline for Sen. Schumer's (D-NY) [Dear Colleague letter in support of FY14 Rural Housing Appropriations](#) has been EXTENDED TO TOMORROW, Wednesday, April 24.

Please continue to call your Senators and ask them to sign onto the letter. Senate staff can reach out to Lane Bodian (lane_bodian@schumer.senate.gov) to sign on.

So far, 19 Senators have signed on, including:

- Baucus (D-MT)
- Boxer (D-CA)
- Brown (D-OH)
- Cantwell (D-WA)
- Carper (D-DE)
- Coons (D-DE)
- Durbin (D-IL)
- Franken (D-MN)
- Gillibrand (D-NY)
- Harkin (D-IA)
- Hirono (D-HI)
- Landrieu (D-LA)
- Leahy (D-VT)
- Levin (D-MI)
- Manchin (D-WV)
- Sanders (D-VT)
- Schumer (D-NY)
- Shaheen (D-NH) and
- Tester (D-MT)

Senators who signed on last year, include: Bennet (D-CO), Johnson (D-SD), Merkley (D-OR), and Wyden (D-OR).

Other Senators who made individual requests in 2012 include: Boozman (R-AR), Hagan (D-NC), and Murray (D-WA). Senator Pryor (D-AR) made a request in 2012, and is now the Chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. Sen. Feinstein (D-CA) is also a member of this Subcommittee.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

House Ag Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing on Rural Development

"Not in tune with rural America's needs..."

"Defies common sense..."

"You're losing your credibility real fast..."

"You aren't helping Rural America. You're just talking about it..."

This morning, the House Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee held a hearing on the Administration's [disappointing FY14 USDA Rural Development Budget Proposal](#), which includes further, disproportionate cuts to Rural Development programs. Led by Chairman Aderholt (R-AL) and Ranking Member Farr (D-CA), the Subcommittee questioned Deputy Under Secretary, Doug O'Brien, Rural Housing Service Administrator Tammye Trevino, and the Acting Administrators for Rural Utilities and Rural Business programs. Overall, the Subcommittee asked them tough, pointed questions that needed to be asked.

Chairman Aderholt questioned USDA's deep cuts to Section 502 Direct Loans and Water/Wastewater grants. "As the only federal department dedicated to rural America, I have to wonder if this budget request is truly in tune with its needs, especially the needs of rural Americans with the lowest incomes." Chairman Aderholt plainly stated that the cuts to the Section 502 Direct Loan program "defies common sense," since many of these borrowers cannot access the Section 502 Guaranteed Loan program.

Ranking Member Farr asked about the delays to USDA's rule on the Section 502 Intermediaries Pilot Program. When Tammye Trevino explained that the Department had made "significant progress" on the rule, Rep. Farr read back her testimony from *last year* saying that they had made "significant progress." Since the rule hasn't even been proposed since last year's hearing, Rep. Farr told Doug O'Brien that he was "losing credibility real fast" and "just acting like a bureaucrat," calling his oversight of the programs "ridiculous." Frustrated, Rep. Farr went so far as to say, "You're not helping Rural America. You're just talking about it!"

The best part of the entire hearing came when Tammye Trevino said that she couldn't tell the Subcommittee why the Section 502 Intermediary Rule had been delayed so long. "Why? Is it top secret?" Farr asked.

Other questions hit on the impact of Sequestration on Rental Assistance. Doug O'Brien noted that the Department is working with its General Counsel (sound familiar?) to find servicing options -- like deferring loan payments or capital reserves -- to mitigate the impact on an estimated 15,000 families. Rep. Valadao (R-CA) asked about cuts to the Mutual Self-Help Housing program and Water/Wastewater Grants. And, Rep. Fortenberry focused on the Rural Definition.

Many of USDA's responses were not only disappointing, but untrue. As such, we will formally respond to Chairman Aderholt to clear the record.

When asked about the average income of Section 502 Direct and Guaranteed Loan borrowers, Tammye Trevino rounded incomes under the 502 Direct Loan program up to \$30,000 (borrowers actually earn an average \$27,000 a year) and understated incomes under the Section 502 Guaranteed incomes. She claimed that 502 Guaranteed borrowers earn only \$40,000 on average, when the Administration's own Congressional Justification states that average incomes are more than \$54,000.

And, when pressed on the Section 502 Intermediary Rule, Tammye Trevino held that any nonprofit organization could participate in the pilot program, simply by contacting their State Director.

Ultimately, the hearing could be well summed up by Rep. Farr's charge to USDA to start living up to its role as the leader on issues relating to Rural America.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Thank You!

28 Senators Sign On!

Thanks to your hard work, 28 Senators signed onto Sen. Schumer's (D-NY) [Dear Colleague letter in support of FY14 Rural Housing Appropriations](#). Not only did **8 more Senators sign on than last year**, but we did it in a very short turn-around time!

As we mentioned, the budget process this year will be very difficult. The Administration's Budget Request for Rural Housing Appropriations was very disappointing, and budget in the House is likely to be even worse. That makes our efforts in the Senate even more important.

The 28 Senators include:

- Baldwin (D-WI)
- Baucus (D-MT)
- Begich (D-AK)
- Boxer (D-CA)
- Brown (D-OH)
- Cantwell (D-WA)
- Carper (D-DE)
- Coons (D-DE)
- Durbin (D-IL)
- Franken (D-MN)
- Gillibrand (D-NY)
- Hagan (D-NC)
- Harkin (D-IA)
- Heitkamp (D-ND)
- Hirono (D-HI)
- Johnson (D-SD)
- Kaine (D-VA)
- King (I-ME)
- Landrieu (D-LA)
- Leahy (D-VT)
- Levin (D-MI)
- Manchin (D-WV)
- Sanders (D-VT)
- Schatz (D-HI)
- Schumer (D-NY)
- Shaheen (D-NH)

- Tester (D-MT) and
- Wyden (D-OR).

I will send out the final letter as soon as it is available.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Sequester Impact on Rental Assistance

Recently, USDA Rural Development Under Secretary Dallas Tonsager sent a [letter to stakeholders](#) about the impact of sequestration -- or across-the-board cuts required by the Budget Control Act of 2011 -- on the Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance program. This letter largely summarizes the information that Deputy Under Secretary Doug O'Brien and Rural Housing Service Administrator Tammy Trevino shared with the NRHC Board of Directors at our March meeting and before the House Appropriations Subcommittee at its hearing on the President's FY14 Budget Request.

According to Tonsager, USDA will continue to fully renew RA contracts as they expire, until funding runs out before the end of the fiscal year. The Department will work with Section 515 property owners to mitigate the impact of sequestration through servicing options, such as loan deferrals.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Sign Our Petition!

Because the House is moving very quickly to mark up their Agriculture Appropriations bill in the coming weeks, we need to let Congress know that proposed cuts to Rural Development programs -- including Rural Housing -- are unwise and unwarranted.

Rural housing and community development programs have already been cut by at least \$750 million since 2010, including a nearly \$400 million cut to Rural Housing programs. Now, the President's FY14 Budget Request proposes significant cuts that will further hurt some of our nation's most vulnerable families. By cutting USDA Rural Development programs by \$200 million, the budget will only make it harder for lower-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities to access decent, healthy, and affordable housing.

Please, [sign this petition TODAY](#) and urge Congress to fully fund rural housing and community programs in FY14. The petition closes on Monday, May 13th.

Because of the short turn-around time, please help us spread the word to as many rural organizations and advocates as possible. The more organizations and individuals that sign on, the stronger our voice will be on Capitol Hill.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Senate Agriculture Appropriations, NRHC Challenge

Senate Agriculture Appropriations

This morning, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture held a hearing on the President's FY14 Budget Request for USDA. Secretary Vilsack and Inspector General Phyllis Fong testified before the Subcommittee.

While most of the hearing focused on provisions in the President's Budget request which would reduce crop insurance, increase funding for agricultural research, extend disaster relief, and move Food For Peace funds to the U.S. Agency for International Development, Chairman Pryor (D-AR), Ranking Member Blunt (R-MO) and others did voice concern about cuts to Rural Development programs.

In their opening statements, both Chairman Pryor and Sen. Blunt questioned Secretary Vilsack about the decision to cut the Section 502 Direct Loan program. Secretary Vilsack argued that USDA is the only federal agency that provides direct homeownership loans, and because of budget constraints, the department is in the process of moving their attention toward guaranteed loans.

In response to Senator Johnson (D-SD) and Sen. Udall's (D-NM) questions about cuts to Water/Wastewater Grants, Secretary Vilsack stated that the grant program was cut because interest rates on loans were already so low. In addition, Vilsack suggested that with tight budgets, USDA needed to be more creative in leveraging private investments. This, we want to see!

Vilsack argued that USDA would focus more on educating private investors about opportunities to invest in Water/Wastewater projects in order to fulfill their corporate responsibility commitments. And, Vilsack stated, USDA's StrikeForce Initiative has led to persistent-poverty communities -- including tribal and Colonias areas -- receiving more attention than ever before. Of course, these communities are precisely the ones that need direct loans for homeownership and grants for Water/Wastewater facilities.

[NRHC Challenge: Forward Our Petition To 10 Rural Organizations](#)

Yesterday, we launched a new petition urging Congress to fully fund rural housing and community development programs in FY14. Proposed cuts to Rural Development programs are bad for rural communities and will only make

it harder for lower-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities to access decent, healthy, and affordable housing.

Please forward [our petition](#) to your networks of rural organizations, private and nonprofit partners, local governments, and advocates.

Challenge yourself to ask at least 10 organizations to sign on before the petition closes on Monday, May 13th.

With your help, we can reach even more rural supporters, build awareness of critical Rural Housing programs, and expand access to safe, decent, and affordable housing for all rural families.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

NRHC Petition Extended Until Tomorrow

Thank you for sharing NRHC's Rural Housing petition with hundreds of rural organizations, private and nonprofit partners, local governments, and advocates. So far, we have collected **over 850 signatures!**

We've extended the deadline to sign on until TOMORROW, May 14th.

Help us reach our goal of 1,000 signatures by forwarding [our petition](#) to other rural supporters. By building awareness of these critical programs, we can expand access to safe, decent, and affordable housing in rural America.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

1 Day Left: Rural Housing Petition

Thanks to your hard work, we've already reached our goal of 1,000 signatures, well ahead of **today's deadline**. That means that rural supporters still have time to sign onto [our petition](#) to help us build an even stronger base of support for rural housing programs!

Please consider sharing the petition to other nonprofit organizations in your community and state, private companies that you partner with, local governments and housing authorities, and advocates. With your help, we can have a stronger voice on Capitol Hill.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Senate Farm Bill Passes Committee

Senate Farm Bill Passes Committee

Yesterday, the Senate Agriculture Committee passed their version of a 5-year extension of the [Farm Bill](#), which included a key provision on the Rural Definition. If enacted, Section 6202 of the Farm Bill would extend the current Rural Definition for 10 years, and would raise the population threshold to 35,000. This language is identical to the amendment that was included in the Senate Farm Bill last year. The Farm Bill could go to the Senate floor as soon as next week.

Meanwhile, the House Agriculture Committee is slated to start to mark up their version of the Farm Bill today. The House Agriculture Committee does not have jurisdiction over Rural Housing programs. As such, Rep. Fortenberry and Rep. Hinojosa's bill (H.R. 858), which extends current law through the 2020 Census, has been referred to the House Financial Services Committee, which has jurisdiction over these programs.

1,200 Signatures!

Thanks to your hard work, we collected over 1,200 signatures for our petition in support of Rural Housing appropriations. This is well over our goal of 1,000 signatures!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

House Agriculture Appropriations Markup

Tomorrow morning, the House Appropriations Subcommittee will mark-up their [draft FY14 Agriculture Appropriations bill](#). While we will continue to dive deeper into the bill, we wanted to share with you some of our initial thoughts. We will be sure to provide more details as soon as possible.

The House bill totals \$19.5 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$1.3 billion below the fiscal year 2013 enacted level and approximately equal to the current level caused by automatic sequestration spending cuts. That means that that the House's budget is \$516 million below the President's request for these programs. Nearly \$2.2 billion is allocated to USDA Rural Development programs, which is equal to the fiscal year 2013 enacted level.

As for Rural Housing programs, the House's budget is a mixed bag. For some programs -- including Section 502 Direct Loans and Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Housing -- the House's numbers are better than what the Administration proposed in the President's FY14 Budget Request. Other programs, including Section 515 Rural Rental Housing and Section 514/516 Farm Labor Housing, were set at the President's rate. A few programs, including the Multi-Family Preservation program, were set below the President's budget. Regardless, nearly all programs are further reduced from FY13 levels. In all, the House's budget is better than it could have been, but is still far off from where it should be.

With \$1.3 billion in reductions, this budget is likely to pass in the House. However, we do expect that the Senate's budget will be better for Rural Housing programs.

For example, the House sets the Section 502 Direct Loan program at \$820 million with a Budget Authority of \$22 million. While this is far better than amount proposed by the Administration (\$360 million in program levels and \$10 million in Budget Authority, the House's budget is still \$80 million less than the FY13 rate, prior to sequestration and other across-the-board cuts.

The Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Housing program had a similar outcome. The House sets this program at \$17.1 million, which is better than the \$10 million proposed by the White House, but still \$13 million below the FY13 rate.

On the other hand, both the House and the Administration proposes to cut the Section 515 Rural Rental Housing program. At \$28.4 million, the House and Administration's budgets came in at the FY13 rates after sequestration, or about

\$3 million less than the enacted level. Likewise, the Section 514/516 Farm Labor Housing program is set at about the FY13 rate after sequestration, or \$2 million less.

The Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance program also has mixed results. While the House numbers come in just \$3 million below the President's request at \$1.012 billion, the House's budget does not address the shortfall from FY13's sequestration. According to USDA, sequestration cuts will result in nearly 15,000 low-income families, seniors, and farmworkers losing access to their rental assistance. With this budget, the Administration will need to continue to find ways to mitigate the impact.

In addition, the Multi-Family Restructuring program did not fare as well under the House's budget. At \$27 million, the House's MPR budget comes in just under the \$27.8 million allocated in FY13, but more than \$5.5 million less than the President's FY14 Budget Request.

Beyond program levels, the House budget also includes an important provision impacting the Section 502 Direct Loan Intermediaries program. Section 735 requires that USDA expand the pilot program to include 5 additional Intermediaries within 90 days of enactment. We had discussed the need for this provision with the Appropriations Committee several times, and are hopeful that this will help move the pilot program forward.

RHS/RUS Programs	FY 12 Final	FY13 Final*	FY 14 Budget	FY 14 House
Section 502 Single Family Direct	900	900	360	820
Section 502 Single Family Guaranteed	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
Section 504 Housing Repair Loans	10	28	26.28	25.36
Section 504 Housing Repair Grants	29.5	29.5	25	18.59
Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Loans	20.8	25.9	23.8	23.9
Section 515 Rural Rental Housing	64.5	31.3	28.4	28.4
Section 516 Farm Labor Housing Grants	7.1	8.84	8.3	8.2
Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance	904	907	1,015	1,012
Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Housing	30	30	10	17.1

Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants	3.6	3.6	0	0
Section 538 Rental Housing Guaranteed	130	150	150	150
Multi-Family Restructuring (Mandatory)	13	27.8	32.57	27
542 Preservation Demonstration Revolver	1	0	0	0
542 Voucher Demonstration	-11	-10	12.57	9.75
Supervisory TA Grants	0	0	0	0
Section 306 Community Facility Loans	1300	2,200	1,500	2,200
Section 306 Community Facility Grants	11.36	28.4	17	13
Section 306 Community Facility G'tee	105.7	57.5	0	47.3
Water-Wastewater Loans	730	1,000	1,200	
Water-Wastewater Grants	351	425	300	
Water-Wastewater Guarantee	70	636	0	
Solid Waste Grants	3.4	3.4	4	3.32
Small Systems Revolver	0.5	1	1.2	0.5
Rural Business Enterprise Grants	24.3	29.8	0	
Rural Development Loan Fund/ Intermediary Re-lending Program (IRP)	17	19	19	18.89
Section 306 Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI)	3.6	6.12	5	5.97
Rural Microenterprise Investment Program	0	0	1.4	0

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Agriculture Approps Moves Forward to Full Committee

As expected, the House Appropriations Subcommittee voted to pass its [FY14 Agriculture Appropriations bill](#) along party lines, with all Republicans voting in favor of the bill and all Democrats opposed. The bill is expected to go to the full Committee as early as next week. No amendments were offered.

As mentioned earlier, the Agriculture Appropriations bill totals \$19.5 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$1.3 billion below the fiscal year 2013 enacted level and approximately equal to the current level caused by automatic sequestration spending cuts. That means that that the House's budget is \$516 million below the President's request for these programs. Nearly \$2.2 billion is allocated to USDA Rural Development programs, which is equal to the fiscal year 2013 enacted level.

Full Committee Chairman Rep. Rogers supported the bill, but voiced concern about growing mandatory spending, which now constitutes 86 percent of the Agriculture budget. Subcommittee Ranking Member Rep. Farr, Full Committee Ranking Member Rep. Lowey, and Rep. DeLauro spoke in opposition to the bill, citing cuts to the WIC nutrition program, the Commodities Futures Trade Commission, and the Food For Peace program.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Approps Committee Approves Budget With Rural Definition Provision

Full Committee Passes Agriculture Appropriations Bill

This afternoon, the House Appropriations Committee voted to pass the [FY14 Agriculture Appropriations bill](#) by vote, sending the bill to the House floor. The bill could go to the House floor later this month, while the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee begins its process next week.

As mentioned earlier, the Agriculture Appropriations bill totals \$19.5 billion in discretionary funding, which is \$1.3 billion below the fiscal year 2013 enacted level and approximately equal to the current level caused by automatic sequestration spending cuts. That means that the House's budget is \$516 million below the President's request for these programs. Nearly \$2.2 billion is allocated to USDA Rural Development programs, which is equal to the fiscal year 2013 enacted level.

Interestingly, Members of Committee held that the House budget provides lower funding than the President's Budget Request for nearly all programs in the bill. A notable exception, however, is the USDA Rural Housing programs, which on the whole, fared better in the House bill than in the President's Budget. Of course, this is due in part to your hard work advocating for these programs.

During the Committee Markup, [Rep. Fortenberry \(R-NE\) offered an amendment](#) to extend the current "rural" definition for USDA Rural Housing programs until the end of the 2014 Fiscal Year. The amendment passed by voice vote without any opposition. Rep. Fortenberry, Subcommittee Chairman Aderholt, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Farr spoke favorably of the amendment and encouraged their colleagues to vote in favor of it. Specifically, the amendment prohibits the use of funds appropriated in the bill to "reclassify" any area or community that is currently considered 'rural.' This ensures that all communities that are currently eligible for USDA Rural Housing programs can remain eligible until September 30, 2014.

While he is still seeking co-sponsors for H.R. 858 -- which would extend current law until the 2020 Census -- this amendment provides rural communities with some certainty as they continue to plan and develop housing. In his statement, Rep. Fortenberry stated, "I do not believe it would in the nation's best interests to artificially cut off access to these programs, which have played such a crucial role in empowering communities."

Rural Definition Scorecard: Beyond the Fortenberry bill and today's action by the House Appropriations Committee, the [Senate Farm Bill](#) (S.954) also includes a "rural" definition provision that would extend current law and raise the population limit for grandfathered communities to 35,000. The House is scheduled to take up its Farm Bill next week. That legislation does not include any "rural" definition language. However, if the House passes a Farm Bill, a conference committee will take up the issue.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

House THUD Subcommittee Markup

This morning, the House Subcommittee on Transportation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) marked up its [FY14 Appropriations bill](#). The bill is slated to go to the full Committee next week. The Senate THUD Appropriations Subcommittee also begins its process next week.

With an allocation of \$44.1 billion -- or \$7.7 billion less than the \$51.8 billion FY13 enacted level -- the THUD FY14 Appropriations bill significantly cuts HUD's housing programs by \$6.8 billion from the President's Budget Request.

Subcommittee Chairman Latham, Subcommittee Ranking Member Pastor, Full Committee Ranking Member Lowey, Rep. Quigley, and Rep. Price all lamented the very low THUD allocation, with Democrats calling it "unworkable," "unacceptable," "impossible," "dismal," and "grossly inadequate." Rep. Price warned against "the twilight of Appropriations," and the end of regular order.

For example, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) was cut in half (50.2%) to just \$1.696 billion, with formula funding at \$1.63 billion. To put this in perspective, the FY 1975 Request was \$2.7 billion.

Likewise, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) is set at \$700 million. This is \$250 million less than the President's FY14 Budget Request, and is \$300 million or 30% less than the FY13 enacted level. If approved by Congress, the HOME program would have been cut by more than \$1.12 billion since FY10, to its lowest level since the program's inception in 1992.

The THUD Subcommittee also set funding for the SHOP program at \$10 million. While this is equal to the President's request, it is more than 81 percent less than the FY13 enacted level. And, the bill rescinds \$120 million under the Choice Neighborhoods program.

The Section 108 CDBG Loan Guarantee program is set at \$500 million, though the House proposes to offset the Budget Authority with fees; Section 202 Housing for the Elderly came in at the FY13 level, though \$25 million below the President's Request; and, at \$127 million, funding for the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation is equal to the President's budget, but \$8 million less than FY13.

HUD Programs (\$ in millions)	FY12 Final	FY13 Final*	FY14 Admin	FY 14 House
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Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation	135	135	127	127
Mortgage Foreclosure Mitigation	80	80	77	58
HOME	1000	1000	950	700
Capacity Building	0	0	20	0
Transformation Initiative	0	0	0	0
Housing Counseling	45	45	55	35
Community Development Fund	3408	3408	3143	1696
CDBG Formula funding	2948	2948	2784	1637
Catalytic Investment Competition Grants	0	0	0	0
Sustainable Communities	0	0	0	0
Regional Planning Grants	0	0	0	0
Community Challenge Grants	0	0	0	0
HUD-DOT research	0	0	0	0
Rural Innovation Fund	0	0	0	0
University Community Fund	0	0	0	0
Choice Neighborhoods Initiative	120	120	400	-120 (rescinded)
Housing Trust Fund	0	0	1000	0
SHOP	53.5	53.5	10	10
Section 108 Program Level	240	240	500	500
Section 108 Budget Authority	5.9	5.9	0	0
Section 202 Housing for the Elderly	374.6	374.6	400	374.6

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Senate FY14 Agriculture Markup

While the Senate full Appropriations Committee marked up its [FY14 Agriculture Appropriations bill](#) on June 20, the bill and its accompanying report were not posted until late last Friday. At this time, it is unclear when the [House version](#) will go to the floor for a vote. The House may delay voting on the Ag Appropriations bill until it resurrects or otherwise disposes of the defeated Farm Bill. The Senate is likely to take up its version this month. In addition, the President has threatened to veto the House bill.

With an allocation of \$20.91 billion -- or \$420 million more than the \$20.53 billion FY13 enacted level -- the Senate Agriculture Appropriations bill is \$984 million more than the President's Budget Request and \$1.41 billion more than the House version.

As expected, Rural Housing programs generally fared much better in the Senate. Some programs -- including Section 502 Direct, Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Housing, Water/Wastewater Guaranteed Loans, Water/Wastewater Grants, Section 504 Grants, Rural Business Enterprise Grants, Community Facilities Guaranteed Loans, and Rental Assistance among others -- were set at a higher level than either the President's Request or the House. Other programs -- including Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Loans, Section 514/516 Farm Labor Housing, Multi-Family Preservation and Revitalization, Community Facilities Loans and Grants, and Water/Wastewater Direct Loans -- were set at the same level as the President's budget.

For example, the Senate bill fully funds Section 502 Direct Loans at the FY13 pre-sequester rate of \$900, compared to \$820 million in the House and just \$360 in the President's Budget. Self-Help Housing received \$25 million, compared to \$10 million in the Budget Request and \$17 million in the House. And, Water/Wastewater Grants were funded at \$337 million, after the President reduced it to just \$304 million.

Like the House bill, the Senate version includes language (Section 730) that would extend eligibility for USDA Rural Housing programs until the end of the fiscal year (September 30, 2014) for all communities that are currently eligible. The Senate language is not identical to the House language, but would accomplish the same purpose. With the future of the Farm Bill undetermined, the Agriculture Appropriations bill may again have the final say on the Rural Definition.

Programs (\$ in millions)	FY13 Final*	FY14 President	FY14 House	FY14 Senate

Section 502 Single Family Direct	900	360	820	900
Section 502 Single Family Guaranteed	24000	24000	24000	24000
Section 504 Housing Repair Loans	28	26.28	25.36	26.28
Section 504 Housing Repair Grants	29.5	25	18.59	28.7
Section 514 Farm Labor Housing Loans	25.9	23.9	21.1	23.9
Section 515 Rural Rental Housing	31.3	28.4	28.4	28.4
Section 516 Farm Labor Housing Grants	8.84	8.3	8.17	8.3
Section 521 Rural Rental Assistance	907	1015	1012	1015
Section 523 Mutual Self-Help Housing	90	10	17	25
Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants	3.6	0	0	3.54
Section 538 Rental Housing Guaranteed	150	150	150	150
Multi-Family Preservation/Revitalization	27.8	32.57	27	32.57
Vouchers	-10	-12.57	-9.75	-12.57
Section 306 Community Facility Loans	2200	1500	2200	1500
Section 306 Community Facility Grants	28.4	13	13	13
Section 306 Community Facility Guarantee	57.5	0	47.3	59.5
Water-Wastewater Loans	1000	1200	1200	1200
Water-Wastewater Grants	425	304	345	337.8
Water-Wastewater Guarantee	636	0	0	50
Solid Waste Grants	3.4	4	3.32	4
Small Systems Revolver	1	1.2	0.5	1
Rural Business Enterprise Grants	29.8	0	20	24.3
Intermediary Relending Program	19	18.89	18.89	18.89

RCDI	6.12	0	5.97	5.95
Rural Microenterprise Investment	0	1.4	0	1.4
*Subject to 7.5% across-the-board cuts				

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Senate THUD Committee Markup

On June 27th, the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up its FY14 Transportation, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) bill. A copy of the bill is [available here](#).

As expected, the Senate bill is significantly better than the House version. With an allocation of \$54 billion, the Senate THUD bill starts with nearly \$10 billion more than the House allocation of \$44.1 billion. Most programs that were previously funded survived, and in some cases, fared better than the President's FY14 Budget Request. Notably, this includes the Community Development Block Grant, which is set at \$350 million more than the Budget Request and nearly double that amount included in the House bill. HOME is also improved over the House level and the Budget Request.

The Senate also set funding for the SHOP program at \$53.5 million. This represents a freeze from FY13 levels, prior to sequestration, and \$43.5 million more than the \$10 million proposed by the President and the House. Section 202 Housing for the Elderly came in at the same level as the President's Request (\$400 million), and funding for the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation was set at \$138 million, slightly higher than the FY13 enacted level and more than \$11 million more than the \$127 million requested by the President or the House.

A number of administrative initiatives--including Capacity Building (\$20 million requested), Family Self-Sufficiency (\$75 million requested), Neighborhood Stabilization (\$200 million requested)-- were not funded in the Senate bill. Likewise, Choice Neighborhoods was funded at \$250 million, \$150 million less than the President's request.

Public and Indian Housing remains the largest account at \$27.2 billion, or \$1.3 billion above FY13. Community Development is slightly above the President's Budget Request, and Housing Vouchers stand at \$10.7 billion, or \$1.4 billion above FY13.

HUD Programs (\$ in millions)	FY12 Final	FY13 Final*	FY14 Admin	FY 14 House	FY14 Senate
Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation	135	135	127	127	128
Mortgage Foreclosure Mitigation	80	80	77	58	77
HOME	1000	1000	950	700	1000

Capacity Building	0	0	20	0	0
Transformation Initiative	50	50	80	0	60
Housing Counseling	45	45	55	35	55
Community Development Fund	3408	3408	3143	1696	3295
CDBG Formula funding	2948	2948	2784	1637	3150
Catalytic Investment Competition Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Sustainable Communities	0	0	0	0	0
Regional Planning Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Community Challenge Grants	0	0	0	0	0
HUD-DOT research	0	0	0	0	0
Rural Innovation Fund	0	0	0	0	0
University Community Fund	0	0	0	0	0
Choice Neighborhoods Initiative	120	120	400	-120 (rescinded)	250
Housing Trust Fund	0	0	1000	0	0
SHOP	53.5	53.5	10	10	53.5
Section 108 Program Level	240	240	500	500	500
Section 108 Budget Authority	5.9	5.9	0	0	0
Section 202 Housing for the Elderly	374.6	374.6	400	374.6	400

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

CORRECTION: Senate THUD Committee Markup

Below is a corrected version. The Senate FY14 Appropriations bill sets funding for the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp. at \$138 million.

Senate THUD Committee Markup

On June 27th, the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up its FY14 Transportation, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) bill. A copy of the bill is [available here](#).

As expected, the Senate bill is significantly better than the House version. With an allocation of \$54 billion, the Senate THUD bill starts with nearly \$10 billion more than the House allocation of \$44.1 billion. Most programs that were previously funded survived, and in some cases, fared better than the President's FY14 Budget Request. Notably, this includes the Community Development Block Grant, which is set at \$350 million more than the Budget Request and nearly double that amount included in the House bill. HOME is also improved over the House level and the Budget Request.

The Senate also set funding for the SHOP program at \$53.5 million. This represents a freeze from FY13 levels, prior to sequestration, and \$43.5 million more than the \$10 million proposed by the President and the House. Section 202 Housing for the Elderly came in at the same level as the President's Request (\$400 million), and funding for the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation was set at \$138 million, slightly higher than the FY13 enacted level and more than \$11 million more than the \$127 million requested by the President or the House.

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HUD Programs (\$ in millions)	FY12 Final	FY13 Final*	FY14 Admin	FY 14 House	FY14 Senate
Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation	135	135	127	127	138
Mortgage Foreclosure Mitigation	80	80	77	58	77
HOME	1000	1000	950	700	1000
Capacity Building	0	0	20	0	0
Transformation Initiative	50	50	80	0	60
Housing Counseling	45	45	55	35	55
Community Development Fund	3408	3408	3143	1696	3295
CDBG Formula funding	2948	2948	2784	1637	3150
Catalytic Investment Competition Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Sustainable Communities	0	0	0	0	0
Regional Planning Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Community Challenge Grants	0	0	0	0	0
HUD-DOT research	0	0	0	0	0
Rural Innovation Fund	0	0	0	0	0
University Community Fund	0	0	0	0	0
Choice Neighborhoods Initiative	120	120	400	-120 (rescinded)	250
Housing Trust Fund	0	0	1000	0	0
SHOP	53.5	53.5	10	10	53.5
Section 108 Program Level	240	240	500	500	500
Section 108 Budget Authority	5.9	5.9	0	0	0
Section 202 Housing for the Elderly	374.6	374.6	400	374.6	400

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Urge Your Senators to Support LIHTC

Call Your Senators! Ask Them To Support LIHTC

Last week, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Baucus (D-MT) and Ranking Member Hatch (R-UT) asked their fellow Senators to send in their [recommendations on Comprehensive Tax Reform](#) by July 26. Baucus and Hatch are proposing a 'clean-slate' approach, which means that any tax expenditure--including the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)--could be eliminated or significantly undermined.

It is critically important that rural advocates make their voices heard! Although LIHTC is widely considered one of the nation's most successful federal housing programs, many lawmakers are simply unaware of the program's vital impact in rural communities.

The deadline for Senate letters is JULY 26th. Please call your Senators well in advance of that date and ask them to include LIHTC in their recommendations on tax reform!

Specifically, ask your Senators to recommend that any tax reform legislation: (1) Maintain LIHTC's permanent authorization; and (2) Make LIHTC's 9 and 4 percent credit floors permanent.

Rural LIHTC Talking Points

- **LIHTC is the principle tool used by rural communities to improve access to affordable rental housing.** Since 1986, LIHTC has financed more than 7,600 affordable rental projects -- more than 270,000 units -- in rural America.
- **LIHTC represents nearly half of all financing available to develop and preserve affordable rental housing in rural communities.** NRHC's 2013 Impact Survey of over 100 rural housing organizations found that LIHTC investments represent 48 percent of all financing for new construction of affordable rental housing and 54 percent of all financing for rental preservation.
- **LIHTC has broad economic benefits for rural communities.** LIHTC has created more than 1.15 million rural jobs, generating \$86.9 billion in local rural income, and \$67.8 billion in local tax revenue, since 1986.

Rural LIHTC Advocacy Resources

To help you in your advocacy, we've put together some resources for you to share with your Senators, including:

- [Rural LIHTC Fact Sheet](#)
- [State-by-State LIHTC Fact Sheets](#)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Sign Our Petition to Protect Access to Affordable Rural Housing

On October 1, 2013, [more than 900 rural communities](#)—and millions of low-income rural families—will lose their eligibility for what is often their only source of federal affordable housing assistance. Without Congressional action, the current definition of "rural"—for USDA Rural Housing programs—will expire, leaving these families without the help they need to access clean, decent, and affordable housing.

That's why we strongly support a provision in the Senate's Farm Bill, which would extend eligibility for all rural communities until the 2020 Census and would raise the population limit to 35,000. Last week, the House finally passed its version of the Farm Bill, which did not address this issue.

In just a couple weeks, however, a Congressional conference committee on the Farm Bill will decide whether the Senate's provision stays in the final bill.

Please sign this petition and [tell Congress to protect access to affordable rural housing](#). Ask them to keep the Senate's Rural Definition provision in the final bill.

In addition, please forward this petition to as many rural organizations and advocates as possible before **the petition closes on Monday, July 22nd.**

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Stop Amendment 1768 From Cutting HOME Program

Today, Senator Jeff Flake (R-AZ) filed Amendment #1768 to the FY14 THUD Appropriations bill, which would cut funding for the HUD HOME Investment Partnerships program by \$50 million and would require the GAO to "determine the adequacy and effectiveness of the program."

Please, call your Senators ASAP and ask them to oppose Amendment 1768 and any other amendment that would cut HOME funding. The Senate could vote on this amendment as early as today!

The HOME program is a federal block grant that provides states and localities with a flexible funding source to meet their diverse affordable housing needs:

- Since 1992, the HOME program has created more than 1 billion units of affordable housing;
- HOME funding is used to finance new construction, rehabilitation, down payment assistance, and rental assistance - exclusively for low-income families;
- \$1 of HOME funding leverages \$4 of additional investment in affordable housing; and
- Between 2009 and 2013, the HOME program has already been cut by more than \$825 million or 45 percent, from \$1.83 billion to \$1 billion. If approved, Amendment 1768 would cut the program by another \$50 billion.

Additional Resources:

- [Rural HOME Fact Sheet](#)
- [State-by-State HOME Data](#)

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Rich Davis as Acting RHS Administrator

Rich Davis Is Acting RHS Administrator

This was Tammy Trevino's last week as Administrator of the Rural Housing Service at USDA. She has taken a new position as Regional Administrator with HUD and will return to her home state of Texas.

Rich Davis, Deputy Administrator of Community Facilities Programs, will step in as Acting Administrator. Dom McCoy will stay on as Chief of Staff.

House Committee Passes PATH Act

Recently, the House Financial Services Committee voted in favor of the [Protecting American Taxpayers and Homeowners](#) (PATH) Act (H.R. 2767). The vote was largely along party lines, with only Rep. Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Rep. Miller (R-CA) voting against the bill.

The stated goal of the PATH Act is to (1) wind down Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, (2) establish the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) an independent agency and limit its authority, and (3) reduce the federal government's role in housing more generally. Specifically, the bill eliminates Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac within 5 years of enactment and lowers the loan limits and reach of the new FHA. Many fear that if the bill is enacted, it will be the demise of the 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage.

The PATH Act is viewed as the best shot House conservatives have to remake (read as "reduce") the role of the federal government in housing. However, in its current form, it is unlikely to become law. It may not even make it off the House floor. Yet, it does represent a marker on the right.

There is also a Senate bill sponsored by Sens. Warner and Corker ([S. 1217](#)) and the White House has now come forward with a [proposal](#). The debate is likely to pick up steam in 2014.

Impact on USDA Rural Housing Programs

USDA Rural Housing programs are caught in the crossfire of the PATH Act. The bill establishes the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA)—the agency that currently oversees Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—as the regulator for

both a newly revised Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and USDA Rural Housing Service housing programs.

Apparently, this would give FHFA the final word on USDA Rural Housing budgets, subsidy rates, and products and services. Specifically, the PATH Act authorizes the Director of FHFA to:

- Develop underwriting standards to be applied to both FHA and Rural Housing programs;
- Supervise, evaluate, and regulate the safety and soundness of Rural Housing Services programs;
- Require RHS to submit reports and respond to data requests;
- Submit annual credit subsidy cost estimates for the Administration's budgets and provide a unified (FHA and RHS) subsidy cost estimate;
- Levy annual cost assessments on HUD and RHS to defray the cost of FHFA supervision; and
- Require the establishment of capital reserves for the Rural Housing Insurance Fund (despite the fact that the Rural Housing Insurance Fund is capitalized upfront through its appropriated budget authority).

The PATH Act does little or nothing to distinguish USDA Rural Housing Service programs from FHA guaranteed loans. The legislation does not address the fact that RHS programs are based on income levels and geographic eligibility. FHA, on the other hand, relies on mortgage size and loan qualifications.

In addition, many of the PATH Act's provisions are inapplicable or inappropriate for rural housing programs. And—as if USDA did not have enough administrative issues—the legislation creates a new regulator, with no obvious experience in rural housing issues.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

New Report on LIHTC in Rural Communities

This morning, Rapoza Associates released a [new report](#) on the impact of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit in rural communities. Because the tax credit is often seen as an urban program, several members of the National Rural Housing Coalition--including **Jeanette Duncan** of Peoples' Self-Help Housing, **Peter Carey** of Self-Help Enterprises, **Dennis Lalor** of South County Housing, **Dave Ferrier** of CHIP, and **John Mealey** of Coachella Valley Housing Coalition--retained us to prepare this report.

The report finds that LIHTC is the principal tool used by rural communities to develop and preserve affordable rental housing. In fact, since its inception in 1986, LIHTC has developed or preserved more than 270,000 units of affordable housing in rural America. This has led to the creation of 1.15 million jobs, generating \$86.9 billion in local income and increasing state and local tax revenue by \$67.8 billion.

In addition, the report cites NRHC's 2013 Impact Survey which found that LIHTC represents 50 percent of all financing secured by NRHC members to develop and preserve affordable rental housing.

I also wanted to thank those NRHC members who contributed such impressive case studies to this report. With 37 success stories from across the nation, the report does a great job of showing the different ways LIHTC has been used to serve rural seniors, farmworkers, and low-income families.

For more information, please feel free to read our [press release](#)!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Update on Rural Definition, Appropriations

Legislative Update

On October 1, 2013, the new 2014 Fiscal Year (FY14) begins and many Farm Bill programs are scheduled to expire. Given the short legislative calendar—there are only 9 legislative days in September—and the importance of the Syria issue, it is increasingly likely that Congress will not enact the FY14 Appropriations bills and the Farm Bill extension before October 1.

Instead, we expect that Congress will enact **about a 2-month, short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) until mid-December**, setting funding levels at the FY13 rate. **As with previous CRs, we expect that this will allow USDA to extend the "Rural" Definition for all currently eligible communities through the term of the CR.** You may recall that last October, Congress enacted two 6-month Continuing Resolutions, which extended eligibility for all rural communities until the end of FY13.

As for the Farm Bill, there seems to have been no progress since July and it is possible that it will not go to conference until December. This is because it is still unclear how the House leadership will address the Nutrition programs, which were left out of the House-passed version. In addition, Congress may decide to buy themselves some time; while the Farm Bill programs expire on October 1, its impact will not be felt until early January, when the crop season officially begins.

In the end, the Appropriations bills and the Farm Bill may be negotiated as part of a larger deal between the House and the President in mid- to late-December.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Register NOW: NRHC Social Media Webinar

[Register Now: NRHC's Social Media Webinar on September 17th](#)

[Click here to register](#) for our **Social Media Webinar on Tuesday, September 17th at 3pm EST**. This webinar will provide you with key resources and information you'll need to use social media to not only build your network of supporters and donors, but to help your voice be heard on Capitol Hill.

Panelists include:

- Sarah Mickelson, Rapoza Associates
- Ayrienne Parks, Rapoza Associates
- Bailey Richards, Housing Development Alliance

Please note that this webinar will be using the GoToWebinar service. If you have any questions about registering, please feel free to contact me at any time at Sarah@rapoza.org. The webinar service may ask you to "download" or "launch" their program. Please do so! The service will only download a temporary file that will automatically be deleted after the webinar.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Section 514/516 NOFA Update

This year, USDA's Section 514/516 Farm Labor Housing NOFA included two significant changes that will make it more difficult for rural housing organizations to secure the additional sources of financing needed to make the program a success. Without providing prior notice to stakeholders, the FY13 NOFA breaks from USDA's past practices by reducing the typical 60-day application period to just 30 days, and by lowering the program's funding award cap from \$3 million to \$2 million.

We continue to work to persuade USDA to change its policies. However, it is unlikely that any change will occur before the deadline on Friday, September 13th. **As such, we recommend that you submit your application with the \$2 million award cap and 30-day deadline in mind.**

This does not mean that USDA will not revise the NOFA. As you remember, last year, USDA reopened and extended the FY13 NOFA deadline after the original deadline had passed. We will be sure to keep you updated on any new developments.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Social Media Webinar Resources

Yesterday, NRHC held its first webinar on how rural organizations can use social media to engage donors, supporters, and Members of Congress. Our guest speakers, including myself and Ayrienne Parks from Rapoza Associates and Bailey Richards from Housing Development Alliance, led the discussion.

Below are links to additional resources from yesterday's webinar. If you have any trouble accessing these files, you can also download them from the *Advocacy Tools* section of [our website](#) or contact me directly:

- [Recording of the webinar](#) so that you can listen again or share with other staff;
- [PowerPoint Presentation](#) to keep for reference;
- [Social Media Advocacy Toolkit](#) with specific details and tips on how to improve your use of social media; and
- [Housing Development Alliance's Facebook page](#) to see how they are using social media as an effective advocacy tool.

This webinar was made possible through the generous support of Capital One.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Government Shutdown and the Debt Ceiling

Congress's inability to enact an FY14 Continuing Resolution (CR) is already having a negative impact on many rural housing organizations. As a result of the government shutdown, many organizations are finding it difficult—if not impossible—to work on federal grants, contracts, or other federal business.

As this time, it appears that the disagreement over the CR will carry over to the issue of raising the nation's debt limit, which is expected to expire on October 17. This means that Congress may ultimately reach an agreement on the CR, but only as part of a grand bargain that could extend to tax reform, entitlements, and sequestration. No one knows just how big or how small this deal may be, or whether the two parties can move off their current positions – particularly on taxes.

Many in the Washington media see House Republicans as being stuck in a “cul de sac,” created by the House conservatives; the House majority simply does not have the leverage—they only control 1/2 of 1/3 of the federal government—to achieve their goal of delaying or defunding of the Affordable Care Act. House Republicans need to find a workable path forward that can help them avoid the dead end that they are facing.

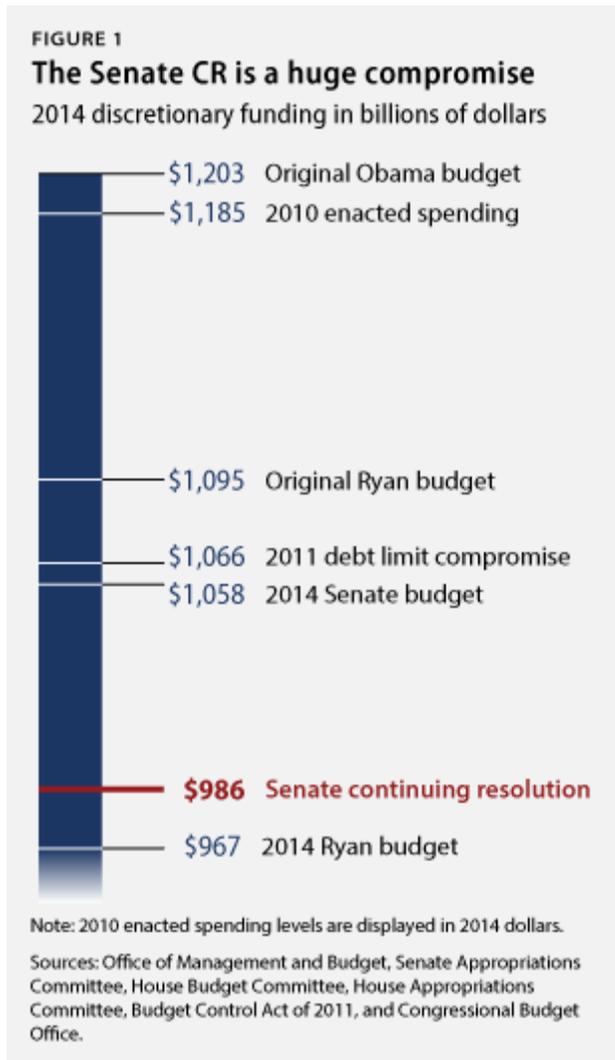
The question for Democrats is how much more will they give. In January, Democrats agreed to a tax bill that made nearly all of the Bush-era tax cuts permanent and did not raise enough additional revenue to stem the deficit tide. On the spending side, FY12 and FY13 were the first two consecutive fiscal years in 60 years in which federal discretionary spending did not grow.

On top of that, FY14 discretionary spending is already \$250 billion less than the Administration's original projections, according to the Center for American Progress. Even the Senate version of the FY14 CR is only \$19 billion above the Ryan Budget Resolution—which was soundly criticized as too extreme just a few months ago (see chart below). In addition, we face another round of across-the-board cuts because of the looming FY14 sequester.

Because it is clear that the Administration will not compromise on the Affordable Care Act, at least in terms of implementation, the real question is what will be compromised instead?

Ultimately, while it appears that the shutdown will continue for two more weeks, it is unlikely that the Congress and Administration will allow a default on

the debt. Best guess is that Congress will raise the debt limit and agree on a continuing resolution in the same legislation.



Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

2013 Annual Meetings

NRHC will be hosting its Annual Meetings on **Tuesday, December 3, 2013 from 8:30am to the mid-afternoon**. All meetings will take place at the Rapoza Associates offices, located at 1331 G Street NW, Washington, DC.

Please remember to [RSVP to the NRHC Annual Meetings](#). In addition, please return this completed [Board of Directors Nomination Form](#) by November 1 to Sarah@Rapoza.org to nominate an NRHC member for the Board of Directors.

Task Force Meetings

NRHC's Task Force Meeting will be held from 8:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. Task Force Meetings are open to all NRHC members.

- *Section 502 Consortium Task Force, ground floor conference room (Contact Tom Carew: tcarew@fahe.org);*
- *National Rural Self-Help Housing Association Task Force, ground floor conference room (Contact Peter Carey: Peterc@selfhelpenterprises.org, or Contact Russ Huxtable: rhuxtable@milfordhousing.org);*
- *National Farm Labor Housing Directors Task Force, 10th FL conference room (Contact Marty Miller: martym2@orfh.org).*

Annual Business Meeting

NRHC's Annual Business Meeting will be held from 10 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. The Annual Business Meeting is open to all NRHC members. At this meeting, NRHC members will elect the organization's Board of Directors and Executive Officers for the coming year, review annual financial reports, and receive a comprehensive legislative report.

Board of Directors Meeting

NRHC's Board of Directors Meeting will begin at 11 A.M and is open to all Members.

Congressional Visits

Please note that NRHC is not hosting a formal "Capitol Hill Day," however individual members are encouraged to meet with their Congressional

delegation. If you need any assistance in scheduling these meetings, please feel free to contact me at Sarah@rapoza.org.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Congress Reaches Deal To Avoid Default, Reopen Government

Late last night, Congress passed legislation to reopen the government and extend the debt ceiling by a vote of 81 to 18 in the Senate and 285 to 144 in the House. You can reach the full text of the bill [here](#). The legislation contains the following provisions:

- The government will be funded through a Continuing Resolution (CR) until January 15, 2014 at the Fiscal Year 2013 level; and
- The debt ceiling will be extended until February 7, 2014. Subsequent increases in the debt limit are subject to a vote of Congressional disapproval, which President Obama can veto. As a result, the debt limit can be raised without the drama we saw over the past few weeks. A similar formulation was used to raise the debt limit in the months after the enactment of Budget Control Act of 2011.

This agreement, which will be in place for three months, does not solve any of the underlying disagreements between the two sides. Regardless, once the dust settles, we expect the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to begin to work on an FY14 omnibus appropriations bill. At this time, both the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations bills include a provision to extend the current definition through the end of the FY14 fiscal year (September 30, 2014).

Soon, the House and Senate will appoint conferees to a budget conference. The legislation enacted by Congress last night does not set binding deficit reduction goals or time frame for a conference report, although these may be determined in subsequent legislation. Regardless, there are enormous obstacles to achieving any conference report that sets limits on discretionary spending, entitlements, revenue, and taxes by date certain.

This is because there remains a vast gulf between the House and Senate on domestic discretionary spending and taxes:

- On Spending - The House and Senate FY14 Budget Resolutions are more than \$90 billion apart. While the House shifts the entire sequester to domestic programs and increases funding for defense, the Senate assumes a freeze on spending and offsets the sequester with increased tax revenue.
- On Taxes - The House calls for \$5 trillion in tax cuts over the next 10 years, while the Senate calls for \$1 trillion in additional tax revenue.

Rural Definition Update

As expected, the Continuing Resolution (CR) passed by Congress late last night included a general provision that allows USDA to extend the current rural definition until the term of the CR expires on January 15, 2014. This means that all communities that are currently eligible for USDA Rural Housing programs will remain eligible until January 15, 2014.

Now that Congress has averted further shutdown and possible default, some have expressed interest in returning their attention to the Farm Bill. As you recall, the Senate version includes a provision (Section 6202), which would extend current law until the 2020 Census and would increase the population limit from 25,000 to 35,000.

Earlier this week, House leadership announced their Farm Bill conferees, which include: Agriculture Chairman Frank Lucas (R-OK), Subcommittee Chairman Rick Crawford (R-AR), and Representatives Conaway (R-TX), King (R-IA), Scott (R-GA), Thompson (R-PA), Rogers (R-AL), Neugebauer (R-TX), Roby (R-AL), Noem (R-SD), Davis (R-IL), Denham (R-CA), and Southerland (R-FL).

Democratic conferees include Agriculture Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MN), Rural Caucus Chair Mike McIntyre (D-NC), Subcommittee Chair Jim Costa (D-CA), Walz (D-MN), Schrader (D-OR), McGovern (D-MA), DelBene (D-WA), Negrete McLeod (D-CA), and Vela (D-TX).

Finally, as mentioned above, we expect the House and Senate Appropriations Committee to begin to work on an FY14 omnibus appropriations bill. At this time, both the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations bills include a provision to extend the current definition through the end of the FY14 fiscal year (September 30, 2014).

You can find [updated fact sheets](#) and information about the rural definition on our website.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

RSVP: December 3, 2014 Annual Business Meeting

We are less than 2 weeks away from NRHC's Annual Meetings, which are currently scheduled for **Tuesday, December 3, 2013 from 8:30am to about 2pm** at the Rapoza Associates offices, located at 1331 G Street NW, Washington, DC. The Annual Meetings are open to all NRHC members.

Please remember to [RSVP](#) and check out our [detailed agenda](#) for the day.

This year, we will have a lot on our plates! First, NRHC's Task Forces--including the Section 502 Consortium, the National Rural Self-Help Housing Association, and National Farm Labor Housing Directors groups--will meet from 8:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. Afterwards, NRHC will hold its Annual Business Meeting from 10:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. At this meeting, NRHC members will elect the organization's Board of Directors and Executive Officers for the coming year, review annual financial reports, and receive a comprehensive legislative report. At 11:00 A.M., the Board of Directors will meet for its final time in 2013.

We've also invited **Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX)**, Chairman of the Rural Housing Caucus, **Mr. Doug O'Brien**, Acting Under Secretary for Rural Development at USDA, and **Mr. Rich Davis**, Acting Deputy Administrator for Rural Housing and Community Facilities at USDA, to join us!

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Annual Meeting Recap, NCRC Webinar

Annual Meeting Recap

It was a pleasure seeing you all at NRHC's Annual Business Meeting this past Tuesday.

For those of you who were unable to attend in person, please feel free to check out the [minutes from the Business Meeting](#) and [Board of Directors Meeting](#). In addition, this is a copy of the PowerPoint that Bob Rapoza used to provide a [legislative update](#).

At the meeting, some NRHC members raised questions about the impact that Immigration Reform would have on UDSA Rural Housing programs. Earlier this year, we conducted some legal research to prepare this brief [memo](#) on the issue.

NCRC Webinar: Access to Capital and Credit in Appalachia

On **Monday, December 9 at 2pm EST**, the National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) is hosting a webinar on its recently published [report](#) on access to affordable credit in Appalachia. The report found that while all communities experienced a decrease in access to affordable credit during the financial crisis, the Appalachian region experienced this at a much greater scale. You can [register for the webinar here](#). *Please note that you may have to create a free account to register.*

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Ryan-Murray Proposed Budget Deal

Late last night, Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) proposed a [2-year budget deal](#). The deal still has to be passed by the House and Senate, and then it needs to be implemented by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees by January 15--the deadline for the current Continuing Resolution.

If enacted by Congress, the proposed deal would partially undo sequestration cuts that were set to take place in January 2014 and 2015. If sequestration were to take place, the top-line spending limit would have been capped at \$967 billion in 2014. With this agreement, the limit would be raised to \$1.012 trillion in 2014 and \$1.014 trillion in 2015. The deal includes \$63 billion in relief from sequestration, split evenly between defense and non-defense programs. In addition, while defense spending would be increased by \$2 billion to \$520.5 billion, non-defense program would see an increase of \$22 billion to bring its total to \$491.8 billion.

The specific allocations for the Agriculture, THUD, and other Appropriations Subcommittees has not yet been determined.

Interestingly, the proposed deal raises revenues--something many conservatives oppose--though none of the revenue is raised through the tax code. Instead, the entire revenue figure comes from increased "fees" on security fees for airplane flights, government pension plans, and student loan collectors, among others.

In addition, the deal does not address the debt ceiling--giving Congress another opportunity to bring us to the fiscal cliff--nor does it include an extension of unemployment insurance.

While this is more of a "petite bargain" than a "grand bargain," it is unclear whether it can pass both chambers of Congress. Already, some key Republicans have come out against the bill, including Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), and some House Republicans have sent a letter to House leadership, asking them to keep sequestration in place.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson

Rural Development MUST Be A Priority

Over the past several years, USDA has proposed drastic cuts to Rural Development programs, including critical Rural Housing and Water/Wastewater programs. In fact, since 2010, the Administration has proposed to cut these programs by over \$700 million! At the same time, the need for more affordable housing and basic services in rural and small town communities continues to grow.

That's why Rep. Hinojosa (D-TX) is leading a letter to the President asking that Rural Development be a higher priority in the upcoming FY 2015 budget.

Please call your Representatives and ask them to sign onto [Rep. Hinojosa's letter to President Obama and USDA!](#) The deadline for Congressional offices to sign on is January 6th.

If your Representative has any questions, they should contact Holly Bullard in Hinojosa's office at holly.bullard@mail.house.gov.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Mickelson