

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2014

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

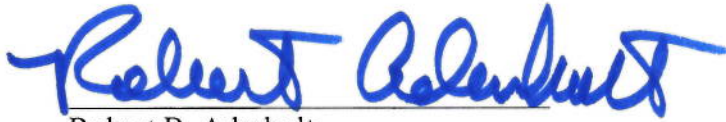
We are concerned that the Rural Housing Service (RHS) is not expected to obligate all of the fiscal year (FY) 2014 funds appropriated for the single family direct loan program by the end of the fiscal year. We would like to request that you direct the agency to take additional measures, to the greatest extent possible, to ensure all funds are obligated.

In the FY 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Act, Congress provided \$900 million for the single family direct loan program. It also provided additional funds for the salaries and expenses of the Rural Development mission area, including funds for information technology investments. We believe RHS should use a portion of these additional funds to ensure this program is fully utilized. Some options include hiring temporary employees, refocusing current full-time staff to the single family direct program, and considering compensation flexibility for current employees.

We recognize the challenges RHS has faced over the past few years, including sequestration and retirements of many key staff. But during FY 2013, as difficult as it was, RHS obligated nearly all of single family direct loans program authority. We also understand that the single family direct loan program is more expensive to operate than the guaranteed program, and that RHS has focused on that program. However, single family direct loans are critically important to rural America, especially small, rural towns, and are a top priority for our Committees.

We request that RHS report to the Committees within two weeks on the measures it intends to take, along with time frames for implementation, to increase obligations in this program before the end of the fiscal year. We appreciate your attention to this matter and the efforts RHS is making to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of this program.

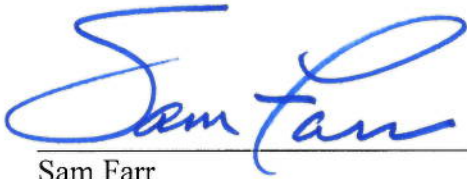
Sincerely,



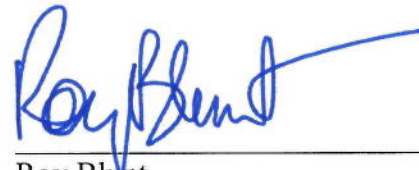
Robert B. Aderholt
Chairman, House Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies



Mark Pryor
Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies



Sam Farr
Ranking Member, House Subcommittee
on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies



Roy Blunt
Ranking Member, Senate Subcommittee
on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies