



NEW SPENDING REDUCTION PROCESS BEGINS. The first stage of deficit reduction required by the Budget Control Act of 2011 allows more total domestic discretionary spending for FY12 than House appropriations bills had anticipated. The House is not expected to reconsider its USDA spending bill, passed June 16 (see *HAC News*, 6/22/11). The House has not yet acted on FY12 HUD funding, and the Senate must address both USDA and HUD. The second deficit reduction stage requires proposals from the new Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction by November 23. The 12 committee members include three Democrats and three Republicans from each house: co-chairs Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX); Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), John Kerry (D-MA), Jon Kyl (R-AZ), Rob Portman (R-OH), and Pat Toomey (R-PA); Reps. Xavier Becerra (D-CA), Dave Camp (R-MI), James Clyburn (D-SC), Fred Upton (R-MI), and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD).

WHITE HOUSE RURAL COUNCIL REPORT AND FORUM FOCUS ON JOBS. A new *Jobs and Economic Security for Rural America* report cites several HUD and foreclosure avoidance programs, mentions USDA housing programs, and acknowledges housing need in Indian Country. President Obama's recent trip to Iowa included an August 16 White House Rural Economic Forum. Visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/rural-council>.

SECTION 514/516 FARM LABOR HOUSING NOFA CORRECTED (see *HAC News*, 7/6/11). The maximum points for energy conservation for purchase and substantial rehab for an existing non-FLH property are increased from 16 to 32. The deadline remains August 22. See *Federal Register*, 8/18/11, <http://www.grants.gov>, or http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD_NOFAs.html. Contact an RD state office.

MULTIFAMILY EXCEPTION AUTHORITY REQUESTS MUST BE COMPLETE, RD REMINDS FIELD STAFF. An Unnumbered Letter dated July 19 emphasizes elements that must be included in a request for the housing administrator to grant an exception to regulations. Visit http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD_UnnumberedList.html. Contact Melinda Price, 614-255-2403, melinda.price@wdc.usda.gov.

AGENCIES REQUEST INPUT ON DISPOSITION OF REO PROPERTIES. The Federal Housing Finance Agency, Treasury Department, and HUD are exploring alternatives for selling single-family real estate owned properties held by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and FHA, including approaches that support rental and affordable housing needs. Visit <http://www.fhfa.gov/Default.aspx?Page=360> or email reo.rfi@fha.gov.

FEDERAL AGENCIES RENEW COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE. USDA, HUD, and 15 others signed a Memorandum of Understanding on August 4 related to the 1994 Executive Order that established the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice. They will prepare strategies, release annual reports, and more to ensure equal treatment for all in environmental matters. Visit <http://epa.gov/environmentaljustice/interagency>.

RD TO CLARIFY CALCULATION OF STUDENT INCOME. The National Housing Law Project reports that RD will issue an Unnumbered Letter making clear that student income should be treated differently for those receiving USDA Rental Assistance than those with HUD Section 8. NHP's summary is posted at <http://www.ruralhome.org>.

FARM LOAN CLAIMS PACKAGES AVAILABLE FOR HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMERS. Those who believe USDA improperly denied farm loan benefits to them between 1981 and 2000 because they are Hispanic or female can request claims packages at 1-888-508-4429 or <http://www.farmerclaims.gov>. No deadline is given.

SEPTEMBER 16 DEADLINE FOR NATIVE AMERICAN TRUST ACCOUNT HOLDERS TO FILE COBELL CLAIMS. A court-approved settlement in July resolved the Cobell case regarding federal government mismanagement of Native American trust funds. Visit <http://www.indiantrust.com>. Contact 1-800-961-6109, info@indiantrust.com.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN FARMERS BEING NOTIFIED OF PIGFORD II ELIGIBILITY. Notices are being sent to those who missed the claim deadline of October 12, 1999 in the original Pigford discrimination case against USDA. Claims packages are not yet available. Updates are posted at <http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/pigford-ii-settlement-update> and <http://www.blackfarmercase.com>. Call 1-877-810-8110.

LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND CHILDREN STRUGGLING, ANNUAL KIDS COUNT DATA SHOW. The 2011 data book from the Annie E. Casey Foundation provides state-level figures. Visit <http://www.kidscount.org> for interactive data or to print or order the book. Contact webmail@aecf.org.

Energy efficiency finance options summarized in report. A new white paper from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy describes the types of initiatives offering financing for the residential and commercial sectors. *Energy Efficiency Finance 101: Understanding the Marketplace* is free at <http://www.aceee.org>. Contact ACEEE, 202-507-4000, aceeeinfo@aceee.org.