



**USDA AND HUD ESTIMATE SEQUESTRATION IMPACTS.** In a letter to Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack stated that if funding for the remainder of FY13 is cut on March 1 (see HAC News, 2/6/13), USDA will need to eliminate Rental Assistance for 10,000 households, not only making their homes unaffordable but also reducing funds available to owners for maintenance and mortgage payments. HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan testified before the committee on February 14, detailing numerous potential program cuts at HUD.

**KEY CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES SET AGENDAS.** HAC has posted a comparison of the action plans for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress set by the congressional committees that have authority over housing programs. The House Financial Services Committee Oversight Plan mentions the impact of 2010 Census data on eligibility for USDA housing programs (see HAC News, 9/26/12). The House committee amended the plan as first proposed by Chairman Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), adding a paragraph on veterans housing and deleting language critical of NAHASDA and CDBG.

**USDA ALLOWS MORE DEBT FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES.** To replace the discontinued Rural Energy Plus program (see HAC News, 9/26/12) for Section 502 direct loans, an Unnumbered Letter dated February 14, 2013 tells agency staff that because energy efficiency lowers utility costs, it may be treated as a “compensating factor” that indicates a homebuyer can safely assume more debt than USDA’s standard amount. Rural Energy Plus remains in place for Section 502 guaranteed loans. Contact Christopher Ketner, RD, 202-690-1530.

**SECTION 523 GRANTEES TO BE FUNDED AT 40%, PENDING APPROPRIATIONS.** Using funds carried over from FY12 and appropriated for FY13 through March 27, USDA will renew contracts of performing self-help grantees at 40% of the amount of their two-year contracts. New contract language will say each grantee may not start more than 40% of the units proposed for the first year of its contract until additional funds are appropriated.

**CDFI BOND GUARANTEE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED.** An interim rule makes this new program effective on April 8, and the CDFI Fund will also accept comments until that date. The CDFI Fund will guarantee bonds issued by approved CDFIs to raise lending capital. Contact Lisa M. Jones, CDFI Fund, 202-653-0421.

**HUD ISSUES FINAL FAIR HOUSING RULE ON DISCRIMINATORY EFFECTS.** The regulation formalizes the standard and process for determining whether a practice had a discriminatory effect, regardless of whether there was an intent to discriminate. Contact Jeanine Worden, HUD, 202-402-5188.

**REGULATORS SET FOUR FINAL RULES ON MORTGAGES,** implementing provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau issued final regulations on mortgage servicing under RESPA and the Truth in Lending Act (contact Whitney Patross, CFPB, 202-435-7700) and on loan originator compensation and related requirements (contact Daniel C. Brown, CFPB, 202-435-7700). Other regulators joined CFPB to set a regulation that requires appraisals for higher-risk mortgages (contact Lorna Neill, Federal Reserve Board, 202-452-3667).

**HAC POSTS ITS COMMENTS TO CFPB ON ABILITY TO REPAY.** Visit HAC’s website. Comments are due February 25 (see HAC News, 2/6/13). Contact Mike Feinberg, HAC, 202-842-8600.

**USDA ISSUES FINAL BROADBAND PROGRAM RULE.** The Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program funds the costs of construction, improvement, and acquisition of facilities and equipment for rural broadband service. Contact a Rural Development office.

**HUD EXTENDS FHA POWERSAVER HOME ENERGY RETROFIT PILOT.** FHA insurance will continue to be available through May 4, 2015 for loans to homeowners to finance energy-saving alterations, repairs, and improvements in existing structures or manufactured homes. Contact Patricia McBarron, HUD, 202-708-2121.

**HUD PROPOSES SOME STREAMLINING FOR FHA SINGLE-FAMILY INSURANCE.** The changes would eliminate the FHA Inspector Roster and the requirement for a 10-year protection plan for high loan-to-value mortgages for newly constructed single-family homes. Comments are due April 8, 2013. Contact Karin Hill, HUD, 202-708-2121.

**TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IS SUBJECT OF HAC BLOG POST.** HAC's latest post on Shelterforce magazine's Rooflines blog is "[What Does the Push for Transit Oriented Development Mean for Rural Areas?](#)" Readers can comment on the blog or on the [LinkedIn](#) discussion about this post.

**HAC PUBLISHES NATIVE AMERICAN HOMELESSNESS TOOLKIT.** *Conducting Homeless Counts on Native American Lands - A Toolkit* highlights steps, tools, and methods that can be used by American Indian, Alaska Native, and Hawaiian Home Lands communities to obtain accurate counts. Print copies are available from [Dan Stern](#), HAC, 202-842-8600, for \$4.00 including shipping and handling.

**Housing Assistance Council**

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