



STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE ADDRESSES BROAD THEMES, TOUCHES ON

HOUSING. President Obama's January 20 speech began with the story of a Minnesota family who recently were able to buy their first home. A later mention of "lower mortgage premiums" apparently referred to the President's recent action to lower HUD FHA mortgage costs (see HAC News, 1/7/15).

PRESIDENT'S FY16 BUDGET EXPECTED FEBRUARY 2. For the first time in several years, the Administration's budget request will be released on time. The Budget Control Act's spending caps will apply to final appropriations for FY16. Check ruralhome.org on February 2 for details.

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP TAKES SHAPE. Chairs and ranking minority members of the housing-relevant committees in the new 114th Congress are mostly in place. In the Senate, Richard Shelby (R-AL) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH) have been named chairman and ranking minority member on the Banking Committee. For the Appropriations Committee those spots are held by Thad Cochran (R-MS) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD). New Senate Appropriations subcommittee chairmen and ranking members are Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) on Agriculture and Susan Collins (R-ME) and Jack Reed (D-RI) on Transportation-HUD. In the House, Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) and Maxine Waters (D-CA) continue as the chairman and ranking member of the Financial Services Committee. For that panel's Housing and Insurance Subcommittee, Reps. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO) and Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO) are the new leaders. Harold Rogers (R-KY) and Nita Lowey (D-NY) continue as chairman and ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee. Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL) will continue as chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Rural Development, and Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL) will be the new chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation-HUD. Ranking minority members are Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA) continuing on the Agriculture Subcommittee and Rep. David Price (D-NC) as the new ranking on T-HUD.

FAIR HOUSING COMMENTS REOPENED ON ONE ISSUE FOR SMALL ENTITIES. In response to comments received on its July 2013 proposed rule on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, HUD is considering giving states, insular areas, small PHAs, and small entitlement jurisdictions more time than others to prepare their first Assessments of Fair Housing. Comments on this specific topic are due February 17. Contact Camille Acevedo, HUD, 202-708-1793.

EPA SUGGESTS ALTERING LEAD PAINT TRAINING RULE. Intended to reduce burdens on industry and the EPA, a proposed rule would eliminate the requirement that refresher training for renovators have a hands-on component, remove jurisdiction-specific certification and accreditation requirements, and clarify requirements for training providers. Comments are due February 13. Contact Marc Edmonds, EPA, 202-566-0758.

HUD PROPOSES CHANGES FOR PROJECT-BASED SECTION 8 AND FOR SECTION 202. Comments are due March 16. One proposed rule would amend HUD's regulations for Management and Occupancy Reviews (MORs) at project-based Section 8 properties, and reduce payments HUD makes to owners for vacant project-based Section 8 or Section 202 units. Another would reduce the frequency of MORs. Contact Lauryn Alleva, HUD, 202-708-3730.

NEW USDA NOTICE ISSUED ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. Administrative Notice 4778 (Jan. 5, 2015) clarifies and updates AN 4747 (Feb. 10, 2014) (see HAC News, 8/20/14), applying the Violence Against Women Act to USDA's multifamily programs. Contact Barbara Chism, RD, 202-690-1436.

USDA RD REMINDS STAFF OF PREPAYMENT REQUIREMENTS. An Unnumbered Letter dated Dec. 17, 2014 tells field staff that owners of multifamily properties cannot avoid the prepayment process by intentionally defaulting on loan payments. Contact an RD state office.

RD GIVES LEAD PAINT GUIDANCE. Administrative Notice 4780 (Nov. 12, 2014) provides guidance on RD compliance with HUD's rule on preventing lead-based paint poisoning. Contact an RD state office.

MAP SHOWS FHA PREMIUM CUTS BY COUNTY. HUD reported that recently announced premium cuts (see HAC News, 1/7/15) will save FHA borrowers an average of \$900 annually. To break down that average, realty information company Realtytrac mapped data showing the savings for median priced homes in many metro

counties, ranging from \$118 to over \$7,900. HousingWire lists the counties with the lowest and highest savings.

LIHTC TENANTS DESCRIBED IN HUD PUBLICATION. HUD compiled data from state housing agencies on Low Income Housing Tax Credit tenants' race and ethnicity, disability status, family composition and age, household income, monthly rental payments and use of rental assistance. *Understanding Whom the LIHTC Program Serves* presents the information nationally and for each state.

Housing Assistance Council

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