



Housing Assistance Council

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July 6, 2017

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture
Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture
Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Bishop:

On behalf of the Housing Assistance Council (HAC), and our partners in Alabama, Georgia and across the country, thank you for your leadership in crafting a fiscal year 2018 Agriculture Appropriations bill that maintains many of the investments that are vital to the rural communities that we serve.

Cognizant of numerous member statements at the mark-up pledging to continue work toward an even “better bill”, HAC strongly encourages the Subcommittee to restore funding for the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI). The competitive RCDI awards allow experienced rural-focused organizations to bring capacity (e.g. homeownership training, strategic planning, fundraising assistance) to grassroots entities that take on affordable housing and economic development in rural communities. Without exception, our partners—especially those serving communities mired in persistent poverty—note that capacity building is both vital to their work, and difficult to fund with the limited available philanthropic support. In short, RCDI makes federal investments to go further, especially in communities where such investments are most needed.

As the process moves forward, HAC joins rural advocates in urging continued sufficient support for the Section 521 Rental Assistance and Section 542 vouchers while funding other rural housing and community development programs at no less than the fiscal year 2017 level. It is also important to our constituency that Section 504 and Section 533 grants remain as stand-alone programs. Both programs provide some of the poorest rural Americans with the opportunity to remain in their homes via the removal of health and safety hazards and other upgrades such as handicap accessibility. We fear that grouping these grants with infrastructure and related priorities will divert resources from those with no other options.

Your support and that of your colleagues allows HAC and our local partners to bring together private and public funding toward affordable rural homes and stable communities. Again, thank you. Please contact me if HAC might provide additional information that is helpful to your Subcommittee’s work.

Sincerely,

Moises Loza
Executive Director

CC: Members of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee

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