



City of Palm Springs

Community and Economic Development Department

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Community Redevelopment Agency • Community Development Block Grant
Downtown Development • Economic Development • Housing • Public Art

January 26, 2011

The Honorable Mary Bono Mack – U.S. House of Representative
Via Fax 202.225.2961

Dear Representative Bono Mack:

As a thirty-two year community and economic development professional in both the public and private sector at the urban county and small cities entitlement levels, I write to express my concerns about The Caucus of House Conservatives, and its Republican Study Committee's, proposal to eliminate the federal government's first block grant program.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program has been the stalwart in *entitlement formula funding* for some thirty-seven years. This federal grant has allowed state, county and local governments to strategically prioritize and address a variety of community development and housing needs. CDBG works and is making a real difference in peoples' lives. It is my sincere hope that this effective program will be sustained and funded at levels that reflect the very real neighborhood revitalization and affordable housing needs that exists across our country.

As a result, CDBG has made long-lasting positive impacts in our City's most vulnerable low-to-moderate income neighborhood areas and in the lives of our less fortunate residents. If it were not for CDBG funds, public facilities and infrastructure would not have been improved to stabilize our older economically disadvantaged areas by developing our '*national award-winning*' James O. Jessie Desert-Highland Community Center and Park, upgrading fire hydrants and sanitary sewer lines, and re-constructing numerous secondary streets with sidewalks and audible pedestrian crosswalk signals for ADA accessibility. These public improvements have also created a climate for investments of new homes and new residents.

CDBG resources have aided the City with public service activities such as Desert Samaritans for the Elderly, Mizell Senior Center, Golden Rainbow Senior Center and Stroke Recovery Center offering enrichment and nutritional services to seniors, the frail elderly and the homebound shut-ins; AIDS Assistance Program and Desert AIDS Project providing the most comprehensive range of supportive services for our residents living with HIV/AIDS; Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, Court Appointed Special Advocates, Boys' & Girls' Club of Palm Springs, Western Coachella Valley Police Activities Police Activities League and YMCA of the Desert captivating the largest extensive youth development actions for our young people; Fair Housing Council of Riverside educating many about fair housing practices; and, Catholic Charities, Episcopal Community Services, Jewish Family Services, Shelter from the Storm and The Well in the Desert tending to our homeless and less-fortunate. As important, our housing rehabilitation activities, through the Home Repair Program, has maintained decent safe housing for our very-low income homeowners barely surviving on fixed incomes.

Defend CDBG
January 26, 2011
Page 2 of 2 Pages

I urge your support in defending the CDBG program that meets the enormous needs of our nation's targeted low-to-moderate income households and their neighborhoods, rather than the your Colleagues' proposal that is calling to leave moderate-income citizens and areas still economically struggling behind.

Thank you for your favorable support of CDBG and response to my request. Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you or your staff members may have at 760.323.8198 or Dale.Cook@palmspringsca.gov. I extend an invitation for a personal tour of our many CDBG projects and local agencies benefiting.

Sincerely,



DALE E. COOK, JR.
Community Development Administrator

CC: Frank Cullen, Jr., Chief of Staff
Amy Ingham, Legislative Assistant
Amber Willis, Special Assistant
Marc Troast, District Director