



City of Grand Forks

Greg Hoover, Director

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November 8, 2011

The Honorable John Hoeven
U.S. Senate
120 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: H.R. 2112--FY12 Funding for CDBG and HOME

Dear Senator Hoeven:

I am writing to join Grand Forks Mayor Michael Brown in urging Senate and House conferees on H.R. 2112 to take certain actions with respect to FY12 appropriations for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, specifically the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) programs.

As did Mayor Brown, I am strongly urging the conferees agree to the House's FY12 recommended levels for formula funding for CDBG and HOME at \$3.5 billion and \$1.2 billion respectively. While Governor of this great state, you witnessed first-hand the value of these programs in providing vital and flexible funding to fill gaps and leverage additional resources for the multitude of activities that create a better quality of life for all of our citizens, especially those on the lower rung of the economic ladder. Nonetheless, allow me to offer two real life (i.e., North Dakota) examples.

1. CDBG is the federal government's program of choice when it seeks to help communities recover from major disasters. This was true in our successful recovery from the devastating flood and fire in 1997 and will be true for Minot's flood recovery.
2. The HOME program has helped provide affordable housing opportunities to low- and moderate income households in Grand Forks by assisting first-time buyers, and building affordable single-family homes and rental units. Similar results are possible in North Dakota's oil patch where communities struggle to maintain affordable housing for existing residents and new ones attracted to this "boom town" part of the state.

I am also asking that the conferees oppose the House-recommended provision to reduce CDBG administrative and planning costs from 20% to 10%. The 20% cap is barely sufficient for us to operate the CDBG program in compliance with the plethora of programmatic and cross-cutting regulations that ensure accountability to Congress and the Nation's taxpayers.

These are not easy things to do given the difficult job Congress has in balancing the budget while spurring economic growth. But the CDBG and HOME programs are critical to the vitality of communities across the country and the economic well-being of their residents. So I hope the City of Grand Forks can continue to count on the support you have given these programs in the past.

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Please contact me if you have questions or need more information. Also contact me if you would like to accept Mayor Brown's invitation for you and/or your staff to tour our CDBG- and HOME- funded projects to see the benefits of both programs firsthand.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Hoover". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Greg Hoover, Director

cc: Mayor Michael Brown