

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 20, 2015

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chairwoman
The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

As you near consideration of the Fiscal Year 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge the Subcommittee to maintain the Federal government's commitment to community development programs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and support \$3.3 billion in formula funds for the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) program.

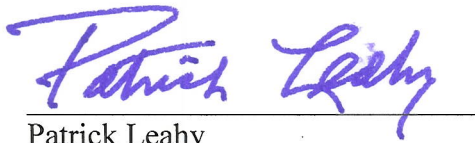
The CDBG program is the centerpiece of the Federal government's efforts to help approximately 1,200 entitlement cities, urban counties, and States meet the needs of low- and moderate-income communities. It is one of the most effective Federal domestic programs to revitalize communities with proven results. The program helps fund a wide range of activities, including homeownership assistance, housing rehabilitation, public improvements, public services, and economic development projects.

According to data reported to HUD by grantees, CDBG housing projects assisted more than 1.2 million households over the past nine years, by providing financial assistance to new homeowners and rehabilitation assistance to the elderly and other existing homeowners. In addition, since 2005, the program has helped create and retain more than 350,000 jobs for low- and moderate income persons through a variety of economic development activities and provided vital public services to over 110 million persons.

We understand that difficult decisions face the Subcommittee, however, we remain concerned about the impact recent cuts have had on the program and the communities that rely on this funding to serve their most vulnerable residents. Last year's funding level of \$3 billion was just \$500 million more, without adjusting for inflation, than the level provided for the CDBG program in its inaugural year of 1975, when there were half as many grantees. Because of these cuts to the formula allocation, programs and projects funded by CDBG and the number of residents served by these activities have been cut, too. In light of these drastic reductions, communities have struggled to continue their programs and have discontinued critical projects for low- and moderate-income persons.

Communities will continue to experience setbacks with a decline in funding for the CDBG formula allocation. Therefore, we urge you to provide \$3.3 billion in the FY16 THUD Appropriations bill to allow the CDBG program to continue vital rehabilitation and improvement projects. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your support of community development and revitalization.

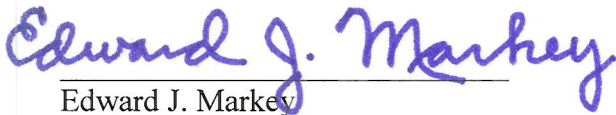
Sincerely,



Patrick Leahy



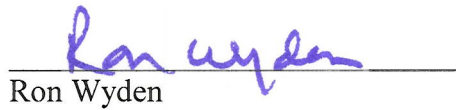
Sheldon Whitehouse



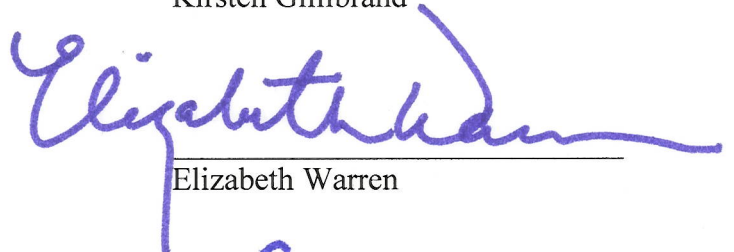
Edward J. Markey



Kirsten Gillibrand



Ron Wyden



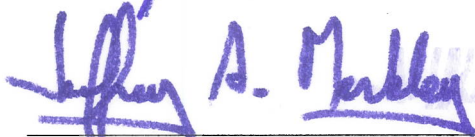
Elizabeth Warren



Tammy Baldwin



Debbie Stabenow



Jeffrey A. Merkley



Cory A. Booker



Richard J. Durbin



Bill Nelson



Al Franken



Barbara Boxer

Maria Cantwell

Maria Cantwell

Jeanne Shaheen

Jeanne Shaheen

Gary Peters

Gary Peters

Bernard Sanders

Bernard Sanders

Martin Heinrich

Martin Heinrich

Charles E. Schumer

Charles E. Schumer

Chris Coons

Christopher A. Coons

Robert Menendez

Robert Menendez

Mark R. Warner

Mark R. Warner

Bob Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Richard Blumenthal

Richard Blumenthal

Angus S. King, Jr.

Angus S. King, Jr.

Joe Manchin III

Joe Manchin III

Brian Schatz

Brian Schatz

Dianne Feinstein

Dianne Feinstein

Mazie Hirono

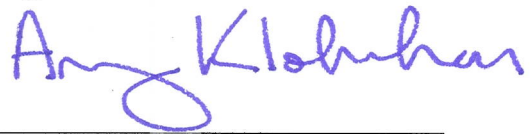
Mazie K. Hirono

Christopher Murphy

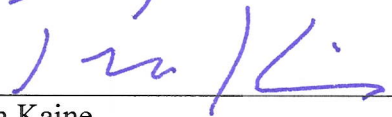
Christopher Murphy

Sherrod Brown

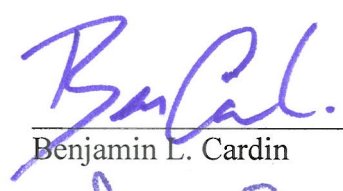
Sherrod Brown



Amy Klobuchar



Tim Kaine



Benjamin L. Cardin



Joe Donnelly