

*[If your congressional member sits on the attached list of House and Senate VA-HUD-Independent Agencies committees, please forward a copy of this letter to them **immediately** to support higher funding for CDBG and HOME in FY04. Congress plans to complete work on all of the spending bills by the week of October 29]*

[Date]

The Honorable [name of congressional member]
Subcommittee on VA-HUD-IA Appropriations
[Address – see attached list]
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator/Representative _____:

As you conference the FY 2004 VA-HUD-Independent Agencies appropriations bill, we ask that you continue to strongly support the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program. These programs remain the foundation upon which local governments across the country provide neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing, and community services to low- and moderate-income households.

The funding for both CDBG and HOME has remained relatively stagnant. With the insertion of the 2000 Census data into the formula allocation for these programs in FY 2004, approximately 60 new CDBG grantees will be created and approximately 20 new participating jurisdictions within the HOME program will be created. While this will greatly broaden the program to other areas, it will decrease funding for existing communities unless the amount allocated in formula funding is increased this year. We urge to support at least \$4.54 billion in *formula funding* for the CDBG program, the level approved by the House for the program in FY04. We urge you to support at least \$1.897 billion in *formula funding* for the HOME program, the level also approved by the House in FY04. We support the American Dream Downpayment Initiative as long as additional monies are provided to fund the program in FY04, as the Senate has suggested.

We also urge you to support the Senate's recommendation of \$6.325 million for the Section 108 program, which provides an authorization of \$275 million for loan guarantees. This program is critical to widespread economic development in urban and rural areas.

Finally, we urge to support \$50 million for HUD's Lead Hazard Reduction Program, as proposed by the Senate. Lead-based paint is a serious health threat, particularly to small children. This funding will help our jurisdiction eradicate lead paint hazards in our low- and moderate-income housing units.

We appreciate your continued support of these programs. Please feel free to contact _____ at _____ with any questions.

Sincerely,

[appropriate signature here]