



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

February 18, 2011

Sent via e-mail to: San Diego Congressional Delegation

RE: H.R. 1- Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011

The San Diego Housing Commission appreciates the opportunity to keep you informed on issues that may have an effect on the work we do to provide affordable housing for families in the City of San Diego.

The passage of the Continuing Appropriations Resolution (H.R. 1) by the U.S. House of Representatives raises serious concerns about the potential loss of federal rental housing assistance for low-income families who can least afford it. Decreasing the funding for the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program would have that result.

In its present form, H.R. 1 decreases funding for the Housing Choice Voucher program over the currently enacted Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 allocation by \$103 million. More ominous is that it would decrease that funding by \$1.47 billion over the proposed FY 2011 allocation.

Housing Choice Voucher is the largest program administered by the San Diego Housing Commission, consuming over 60 percent of our annual budget. It is exclusively funded with federal dollars provided by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

- With funding this year of \$173.9 million, the Housing Choice Voucher program provides 14,000 extremely and very low-income families—more than 40,000 San Diego adults and children—with safe and secure rental housing.
- About 55 percent of Housing Choice Voucher recipients are seniors or persons with disabilities.
- At least 75 percent of the households receiving such assistance have annual incomes less than 30 percent of the area median income (AMI), \$16,500 for an individual or \$23,550 for a family of four in San Diego.
- The need for housing assistance in San Diego is far greater than available funding can accommodate. More than 52,000 families that have applied, including tens of thousands of elderly or disabled persons living on fixed incomes, will have to wait up to ten years for urgently needed assistance.
- The Housing Choice Voucher rent subsidies significantly boost the local economy as they are provided in the form of direct rent payments to over 6,000 landlords operating private-market residential properties.

Our ability to administer the Housing Choice Voucher program will also be impacted by H.R. 1 because it proposes to cut administrative fees by \$368 million over the currently enacted FY 2010 allocation and by \$584 million over the proposed FY 2011 allocation.

Administrative fees associated with operating the Housing Choice Voucher program include not only the case managers who assist families on a daily basis but the inspectors who ensure that selected rental housing units are safe and sanitary.

Administrative fees also fund staff for the Achievement Academy of the San Diego Housing Commission, a 9,600 square foot state-of-the-art learning and skills center that provides our rental assistance families the tools to become less reliant on government assistance and achieve economic independence.

Family Self-sufficiency is one of the core programs of the Achievement Academy. Hundreds of families have participated in the program and successfully pursued college degrees, started their own businesses, and purchased homes under a special first-time homebuyer program.

Today, the San Diego Housing Commission serves close to 76,000 San Diegans annually through an array of effective federal programs designed to preserve, maintain, and expand affordable housing opportunities.

The critical role of the Federal Government in the provision of housing assistance to low-income families, seniors and the disabled cannot be understated. It is a historical role that must continue if we are to meet the significant housing needs of our nation.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Gentry  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
San Diego Housing Commission

San Diego Congressional Delegation:

The Honorable Darrell Issa  
The Honorable Brian P. Bilbray  
The Honorable Bob Filner  
The Honorable Duncan D. Hunter  
The Honorable Susan A. Davis  
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
The Honorable Barbara Boxer