

April 28, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman, Chairman
The Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Edward Markey, Chairman
The Honorable Fred Upton, Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Waxman, Barton, Markey, and Upton:

**Investing Climate Change Revenues in Subsidized Housing Energy Efficiency
Would Cut Emissions and Lower Future Federal Costs**

The undersigned organizations strongly urge using a portion of the revenues generated by climate change legislation to fund improvements in energy efficiency. Congress should target a portion of climate revenues on energy efficiency improvements for public housing and privately-owned HUD- and USDA- subsidized housing, for several reasons:

- **Efficiency improvements in public and subsidized housing offers substantial opportunities to reduce energy use and lower greenhouse gas emissions.** The bulk of the public and subsidized housing stock is *more than 25 years old*, and like other older buildings, many of these housing developments use energy inefficiently.
- **Reducing energy use in public and subsidized housing also would generate federal savings**, which might then be directed toward other energy efficiency and housing priorities or toward deficit reduction. HUD spends more than \$3 billion every year on utility costs in project-based Section 8 (the largest HUD program providing subsidies tied to particular privately owned buildings) and public housing.
- **Energy efficiency investments would benefit the needy families and individuals who live in subsidized housing** by preserving developments and improving the safety and reliability of heating and other systems. Lower energy use would also often reduce expenses for needy residents, who in many cases pay a portion of utility costs. Most households in subsidized housing have incomes below the poverty line, and most also have at least one member who is elderly or has a disability.
- **The Weatherization Assistance Program and Energy Efficiency Block Grants are unlikely on their own to adequately address needs in subsidized housing.** States and localities may face considerable political pressure to direct limited funds to improve efficiency in owner-occupied homes or businesses and may view investments in federally subsidized housing as a federal responsibility.

Climate Change Funds for Energy Efficiency
April 28, 2009
Page Two

Congress could take a major step to improve efficiency in subsidized housing by allocating some climate revenues toward that purpose. We urge Congress to support this effort to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and operating costs, and improve housing quality by prioritizing funding for federally assisted housing to improve efficiency.

Thank you for your attention to this important housing issue. If you have any questions, please contact Toby Halliday at the National Housing Trust (202-333-8931, ext. 130).

Endorsed by:

Action Housing, Inc., Pittsburgh
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
California Housing Partnership
CASA of Oregon
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Coalition for Economic Survival, Los Angeles
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities
Community Economic Development Assistance Corp. (CEDAC), Massachusetts
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
Crossroads Urban Center, Salt Lake City
Housing Assistance Council
Housing Preservation Project, St. Paul, MN
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Mercy Housing
Minnesota Housing Partnership
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
National Housing Conference
National Housing Law Project
National Housing Trust
National Leased Housing Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
Network for Oregon Affordable Housing
New York State Tenants & Neighbors
Ohio Capital Corporation
Preservation of Affordable Housing, Boston
Public Counsel, Los Angeles
Public Housing Authorities Directors Association
Southwestern Pennsylvania Alliance of HUD Tenants
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
Texas Tenants' Union