



The Federal Monitor

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News of Issues Affecting Tribes and Tribal Housing Programs

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National American Indian Housing Council

NAIHC, a not-for-profit organization, assists tribes and tribal housing entities in reaching their self-determined goals of providing culturally relevant, decent, safe, sanitary and quality affordable housing for Native people in Indian communities and Alaska Native Villages.

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KNOCK, KNOCK WHAT IS AN EARMARK?

Members of the 109th Congress went home on December 9, 2006, with only two annual appropriations bills passed before the bitter end of the lame duck session. One of Congress' last acts was to pass a Continuing Resolution (CR) for the remaining nine \$460 billion appropriations bills that will continue to fund Indian housing programs at the appropriated '06 levels through February 15, 2007 (the lowest of appropriated, Senate-passed or House-passed levels).

Representative David Obey (D-WI), Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee and incoming Chairman, called it "a disservice to the Congress, the President and the country."

New faces will be on the Hill and others returning for the 110th Congress on January 4, 2007. Congress' plate is full: the President's '08 budget, a war package, ethics rules, and the oft spoken about "First 100 Hours."

What we do know: Putting '07 appropriations to bed with a CR through September 30, 2007 and a "No earmarks" rule. An earmark is vaguely defined but OMB generally defines it as a project, activity or institution not requested by the executive.

What we don't know: Will the CR be funded at the House FY '07 proposed level, Senate FY '07 proposed level or appropriated '06 level? The latter '06 level will not be good for Indian Housing as a \$1.9 million increase in the IHBG will not happen. The House FY '07 proposal would not be so good for NAIHC as it will only fund training and technical assistance at \$990,000, only 25% of total funding from years past. The Senate FY '07 proposal ideally funds *both* the IHBG and NAIHC at desired levels.

What you can do:

- Thank your Members of Congress for making a place for Indian Housing in the new Congress and that you look forward to working with them.
- Encourage your Members of Congress to move swiftly and assuredly on the '07 Appropriations.
- Let them know that a Continuing Resolution at the appropriated '06 level will harm Indian Housing.
- Tell them you believe that NAIHC is an authorized expenditure under NAHASDA, not an earmark. See 25 U.S.C. § 4212.