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The National American Indian Housing Council is a not-for-profit organization representing tribes and tribal housing organizations on affordable housing, mortgage lending, finance, and economic development issues.

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COUNCIL**

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The Federal Monitor

News of Issues Affecting Tribes and Tribal Housing Programs

HUD Sends Notice on Negotiated Rulemaking

HUD issued a notice today announcing its intent to establish a negotiated rulemaking committee to recommend changes to the Indian Housing Block Grant Program and amendments to the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA). Nominations and comments on committee formulation are to be submitted directly to the Regulations Division, Office of General Counsel, Room 10276, HUD, 451 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, D.C., 20410-0500 by **March 24, 2005**. Faxed comments will be not accepted. To view HUD's announcement online, please go to <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/pdf/05-3091.pdf>. For information about the process, contact Rodger Boyd, ONAP Deputy Assistant Secretary, at 202-401-7914.

In the past, NAIHC members have expressed concerns about the negotiated rulemaking committee membership composition, appointment, issue parameters and committee process. HUD's announcement provides an opportunity for those concerns to be addressed before the negotiated rulemaking committee is formulated. NAIHC's Governmental Affairs Office asks for copies of comments sent to the Regulations Division to be forwarded to Ross Bell at rbell@naihc.net or faxed to the office at 202-898-0027.

Indian Housing Amendments

Congressmen Rick Renzi (R-AZ) and Jim Matheson (D-UT) have reintroduced the Native American Housing Enhancement Act for consideration by the 109th Congress. The bill, H.R. 797, includes three key provisions, identical to what was considered at the end of the 108th Congress: 1) a technical change to the program income amendment from 2002; 2) allowing tribes the ability to compete for HUD YouthBuild funds; and 3) allowing for Indian preference in USDA housing programs. Senators Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Michael Enzi (R-WY) will also reintroduce identical legislation in the Senate next week.

President's FY 2006 Budget Request

On Feb. 7, the Bush Administration released its proposed budget with major changes to HUD funding. The Administration has proposed nearly across-the-board, flat-lined or decreased levels of funding for tribal programs, including \$583 million for the Native American Housing Block Grant. Requested discretionary budget authority for FY 2006 for HUD was \$28.510 billion, a decrease of roughly 12% over FY 2005.

Under the President's proposed budget, funding to Section 184 Indian Homeownership Loan Guarantee and Title VI Loan Guarantee programs have increased, showing the President's continued commitment to increasing

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minority homeownership. However, the increases aren't enough to offset the immense proposed losses to Indian country. Currently in the FY 2005 appropriations, the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) is funded at \$68 million and the Native American Housing Block Grant is funded at \$622 million for combined \$690 million for Indian housing (after rescissions). Under the proposed budget, the ICDBG would be rolled into the Native American Housing Block Grant for a combined total of \$583 million, which would translate into a loss of \$107 million in housing for Indian country.

Additionally, the Administration has once again proposed cutting NAIHC's technical assistance and training funding from the Native American Housing Block Grant, as well as cutting funding for HUD's Rural Housing and Economic Development program. Also taking a hit are USDA's rural housing programs, which have become of increasing value to tribes.

In response to the budget request, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Chairman John McCain (R-AZ) convened a hearing on funding to Indian programs. NAIHC Chairman Chester Carl, who testified during the hearing, told Senators of the need for NAHASDA and ICDBG funding, and the concern of Native American veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Carl requested that Congress fund a separate program for Native American veterans from the Veterans Affairs appropriations, as hundreds of Native people return from the Iraq war to conditions worse than what is being rebuilt abroad. NAIHC's Governmental Affairs Office flew in two Iraq War veterans, Gerald Dupris of the Cheyenne River Lakota Nation in South Dakota, and Julius Tully of the Navajo Nation in Arizona, to speak about their experiences in the war and housing conditions on the reservation at a press conference after the Indian Affairs hearing in D.C. The Governmental Affairs Office will meet with congressional members and their staff on the issue before the budget committee crafts the congressional budget for FY 2006.

Legislative Conference Well-Attended

More than 180 people attended NAIHC's 11th Annual Legislative Conference February 15-17 at the Wyndham Washington, D.C. The conference was held during a hearing of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs' on the President's Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Request. As stated above, NAIHC Chairman Chester Carl testified during the hearing, which was broadcast at the Wyndham for conference attendees. The hearing can be seen on the Indian Affairs' Website at <http://indian.senate.gov/mainpage.htm>. Scroll down to the February heading and click on View Hearing under 2/16/05 Oversight Hearing. NAIHC will have audio and handouts of the plenary sessions available on our Website at www.naihc.net under "Conferences" later this week. Thank you to all who participated, particularly our speakers and sponsors, Fannie Mae and AMERIND Risk Management Corp.