

June 27, 2007

The Honorable Barney Frank
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services
U.S House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Frank,

On behalf of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, I offer our enthusiastic endorsement of the legislation you are introducing to establish a National Housing Trust Fund. The National Low Income Housing Coalition, and our more than 5,600 partners in the National Housing Trust Fund Campaign (list attached), commend you for your leadership in the development of this important bill, in securing dedicated sources of funding, and in garnering bipartisan support.

The primary purpose of the National Housing Trust Fund will be to produce and preserve rental homes that are affordable for the lowest income families. The goal is to bring 1.5 million affordable housing units on line within ten years. This will make a substantial contribution toward ending the affordable housing crisis in America.

NLIHC analysis of the 2005 American Community Survey indicates that 71% of extremely low income renter households and 64% of extremely low income homeowners pay more than half of their income for housing. In its most recent "worst case housing needs" report to Congress, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reports a substantial increase in unmet housing needs among the nation's very low income renters. The number of very low income households that spend more than half of their income on housing jumped from 5.18 million in 2003 to nearly 6 million in 2005, a 16% increase.

We are pleased that this bill requires that 75% of the Trust Fund dollars must be spent on housing that is affordable to extremely low income families. This is the income group for whom the fewest resources are available. Included in this income group are low wage workers, people with disabilities, seniors on fixed incomes, and people who are homeless. The bill explicitly provides resources for both urban and rural areas.

A National Housing Trust Fund builds on the success of the more than 600 state and local housing trust funds that have been enacted in the last two decades, providing an important new source of revenue for housing production.

We are committed to enactment of this legislation and stand ready to work with you to make that a reality in the 110th Congress.

Thank you for your longstanding service on behalf of the lowest income people in our country.

Sincerely,

Sheila Crowley
President