

May xx, 2009

Senator Patty Murray, Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation and
and Housing and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Senator Christopher Bond, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation
and Housing and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Bond:

As you identify priorities for the FY 2010 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, we write in support of a \$225 million funding level for HUD's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control.

The record is clear that these funds are vitally important for helping cities and states achieve the goal of ending childhood lead poisoning. According to HUD statistics, 23 million homes in the United States have significant lead-based paint hazards. In 2008, HUD's lead hazard control grant programs rendered 12,957 homes lead-safe, exceeding the annual goal by 23 percent. However, some 240,000 children under the age of six continue to present with blood-levels high enough to cause irreversible neurological damage and significant learning difficulties. Further, 5.7 million households live in homes with moderate or severe hazards such as incomplete cooking facilities, inadequate plumbing, the presence of mice and rats, and crumbling roofs and foundations. As our housing deteriorates, our health care system bears the brunt of associated injuries and illnesses.

Within the total appropriation of \$225 million, we respectfully request that you provide \$95 million for lead hazard control grants, at least \$50 million for the High Lead Area Removal Initiative, and \$10 million for technical assistance. We also would request at least \$70 million for the Healthy Homes Initiative, which funds efforts by cities, states, researchers, community-based organizations, and weatherization programs to find practical solutions to the multiple health risks posed by substandard housing. This will enable the healthy homes initiative to expand its assistance to states and localities in remedying the more than 5 million homes nationwide with severe and moderate physical hazards. In the past grant round, only 47% of eligible lead hazard control grants and 20% of eligible healthy homes initiative grants were able to be awarded due to funding shortages.

Safeguarding funding for HUD's lead control and healthy homes initiatives will help build public and private capacity to develop and disseminate cost-effective maintenance and remodeling practices. These investments in preventing disease will reap enormous benefits for America's families, schools, and economy.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests, and for your longstanding leadership in protecting children from lead poisoning and other health hazards.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Olympia Snowe
United States Senator