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“National Day of Silence” For Low-Income Housing Day Marks Historically Low Funding Levels

OAKLAND, CA, - The nation’s Public Housing Authorities will observe a “National Day of Silence” on January 10, 2007. This extraordinary event has been organized to draw attention to the federal government’s systematic disinvestment in low-income housing programs.

According to a recent announcement by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the nation’s Public Housing Authorities will receive 76 percent of their 2007 funds for basic maintenance and administration of the Public Housing program. Unless Congress intervenes, this will amount to a \$1 billion shortfall nationwide for a program that primarily serves elderly, disabled and very low income families. Unfortunately, public housing has only received 100 percent of its basic operating funds twice in the last 13 years.

Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) will receive \$2.9 million *less* than it is entitled to and requires to cover basic operating costs for the city’s public housing program, which currently houses 2,717 of Oakland’s lowest-income families. It will be extremely difficult for OHA to fill the gap left by the 24 percent loss of federal funding. Services, particularly property improvements that would have been provided with full funding, will be seriously reduced. The Housing Authority’s ability to respond to community concerns about the quality of public housing properties will also be seriously affected by this ongoing disinvestment by the federal government.

A “National Day of Silence” has been organized to help Public Housing Authorities inform their communities of the challenges such drastic underfunding brings. The Oakland Housing Authority supports this effort, and encourages supporters of low-income housing projects to join in recognizing the difficulties ahead.

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