



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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February 11, 2005

ACTION NEEDED TO FIGHT ELIMINATION OF CDBG

Dear Mayor:

On Tuesday, February 8, leaders from the National League of Cities (NLC) and the National Association of Counties (NACo) joined with The U.S. Conference of Mayors and a coalition of business leaders and locally-appointed officials in a press conference to denounce the elimination of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in the proposed 2006 Federal Budget.

I, along with the leaders of NLC, NACo and the other coalition members, reviewed the budget proposal and concluded that the Administration is proposing the elimination of CDBG. The Administration would then transfer a reduced level of the program's funds -- along with the funds of 17 other programs -- to the Commerce Department for consolidation into a new "Strengthening America's Communities Initiative." All press conference participants agreed on two key points:

- 1) **CDBG must not be eliminated and must remain at HUD;** and
- 2) **CDBG must be fully funded at \$4.7 billion.** (The proposed Commerce Department consolidation would fund all 18 programs at only \$3.7 billion.)

Our CDBG Coalition is taking immediate action to defeat the elimination of CDBG. We have bi-partisan support in both the House and Senate. Senators Norm Coleman (MN) and George V. Voinovich (OH) have already made strong public statements in support of CDBG. Both Senators Coleman and Patrick Leahy (VT) are developing sign-on letters to oppose the budget proposal. And, we have met with Republican and Democratic supporters in the House who have encouraged us to be very vocal, such as Representatives Mike Turner (OH) and Emanuel Cleaver (MO).

We need you to call your Senators and Representatives today and urge that CDBG not be eliminated and remain at HUD, and that CDBG be fully funded at \$4.7 billion. Although there is no specific legislative action that will occur until early March when the Senate is expected to consider the budget resolution, it is necessary that we immediately begin to let Congress know that we are strongly opposed to this proposal to eliminate the CDBG program as it currently exists.

With our coalition partners, we are pursuing a vigorous grassroots efforts that will involve you, your community development and housing directors, local business leaders, and the sub-recipients of CDBG. Through such an effort we are attempting to put down the budget proposal quickly. Many of you have already held press conferences or issued statements. Within the next few days we will get additional materials to you including a sample op/ed, resolutions, talking points, a handbook for this year's National Community Development Week, and other materials. We are also setting up a telephone operation to keep you informed about key actions before they occur and how you can help.

If you have any questions, or want to provide any feedback, please contact our Executive Director Tom Cochran or Assistant Executive Director Gene Lowe at (202) 293-7330. I appreciate the effort I know you will make to defeat the elimination of CDBG. If we all work together, we will not fail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald L. Plusquellic".

Donald L. Plusquellic
Mayor of Akron
President