

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to testify before you today about how robust investment into affordable housing infrastructure should be included in any infrastructure spending package.

Congress must recognize that our nation's infrastructure extends beyond making investments in our roads, bridges, ports, and airports. It also includes our nation's affordable housing. Yesterday, the Committee on Financial Services held a hearing entitled "Housing in America: Assessing the Infrastructure Needs of America's Housing Stock". We heard from a variety of witnesses including representatives from the real estate industry, a low-income housing advocacy group, and the public housing authority association on the need to preserve and build the nation's affordable housing stock.

We are in the midst of a housing affordability crisis. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, there is a shortage of more than 7.2 million rental housing units that are affordable and available to the lowest income families. In fact, no state in America has an adequate supply of affordable housing for the lowest income renters. For example, California has a deficit of over a million affordable and available units. Wisconsin has a deficit of nearly 140,000 units. Mississippi has a deficit of nearly 50,000 units. New York has a deficit of over 600,000 units.

Rising rents and gentrification are part of this problem. For example, in my district, the City of Inglewood is experiencing economic development which, while it offers many benefits for the community, has also resulted in higher rents and led to displacement of residents. Affordable housing must be part of any solution, or long-time—and often lower income—residents will lose their homes. During yesterday's hearing, the National Low-Income Housing Coalition highlighted the importance of funding federal programs such as the National Housing Trust Fund and how they can serve as tool for equitable development and keep neighborhoods affordable for extremely low-income individuals.

Our public housing system, which houses 2.6 million Americans, is also in dire need of investment to repair kitchens, elevators, baths, doors, windows, and roofs. In their testimony, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials noted that the Public Housing Capital Fund and Public Housing Operating Fund have endured deep funding cuts, forcing housing agencies to forgo critical maintenance. Our public housing developments need energy efficient systems, repaired elevators, new sprinkler systems, lead-based paint remediation, and other structural improvements to improve resident's health and safety. As a result of the chronic underfunding and disinvestment in America's public housing infrastructure, there is a public housing capital needs backlog of \$70 billion and around 10,000 units are lost each year.

Neglecting our housing infrastructure also hurts our economy. Studies have found that the lack of affordable housing hurts economic productivity and wages. At our hearing, the National Association of Homebuilders testified that building 100 affordable rental apartments generates \$11.7 million in local income, \$2.2 million in taxes and other revenues for local governments, and 161 local jobs.

For all of these reasons, I have put forth a discussion draft that would make the investments we need in our housing infrastructure and create jobs across the country.

The bill contains:

-) \$1 billion to fully fund the backlog of capital needs for the Section 515 and 514 rural housing stock;
-) \$5 billion to support mitigation efforts that can protect communities from future disasters and reduce post-disaster federal spending;
-) \$5 billion for the Housing Trust Fund to support the creation of hundreds of thousands of new units of housing that would be affordable to the lowest income households;
-) \$100 million to help low income elderly households in rural areas age in place; and,
-) \$1 billion for the Native American Housing Block Grant Program to address substandard housing conditions on tribal lands;
-) \$10 billion for a CDBG set-aside to incentivize states and cities to eliminate impact fees and responsibly streamline the process for development of affordable housing; and
-) \$70 billion to fully address the public housing capital backlog.

Any infrastructure package should also consider ways to incentivize developers to reduce the energy costs of affordable housing and to create housing that accommodates generations of families living under one roof. We must make big, bold, investments in affordable housing. Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer agree. This week, they sent a letter to the President, calling for a broad, comprehensive infrastructure package that includes investment in housing.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal.