

November 12, 2009

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Representative:

The role of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) has never been more important than it is today, and we urge you to assure the continued effectiveness of this important agency. FHA has been a primary factor in allowing hard-working families to purchase a home, and provides mortgage liquidity when so many others have pulled back from this market. FHA has helped to strengthen housing in this country and has helped our national economy to recover.

Without FHA, families would be unable to purchase homes and cities and counties would suffer from continued foreclosure and blight. On September 30, the Federal Reserve published its draft explanation of the 2008 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data. That report shows the critical role FHA plays in the market. According to the Federal Reserve, FHA was responsible for 21% of all home loans during 2008, but by December of 2008, it had increased to 38% of home purchase loans and 25% of refinance loans. In addition, minority borrowers rely heavily on FHA. According to the Federal Reserve, "In 2008, more than 60 percent of home purchase loans and almost 40 percent of refinance loans to blacks were from either the FHA or VA. For Hispanic-white borrowers, nearly 50 percent of their 2008 home-purchase loans and 21 percent of their refinance loans were from the FHA or VA."¹

FHA's new, expanded role has filled an important vacuum in the mortgage market. Its continued participation is critical to a housing recovery. FHA's larger market share does require increased risk management, and we support efforts that have been undertaken by the agency's new leadership. We believe FHA is taking the necessary steps to assure it remains a critical source of mortgage insurance for America's homebuyers at all times – good and bad.

On behalf of the below listed organizations, we urge you to continue to support the good work of FHA, and the regulatory and common sense business changes that are already underway at the agency. Unnecessary changes or restrictions to the program will only hamper our economic recovery and hurt millions of families who rely on FHA insurance to obtain safe, affordable mortgage financing.

Sincerely,

American Mortgage Cooperative
Asian Real Estate Association of America
Center for Responsible Lending
Community Mortgage Banking Project
Community Mortgage Lenders of America
Consumer Federation of America
Housing Policy Council
Mortgage Bankers Association

National Association of Counties
National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals
National Association of Home Builders
National Association of REALTORS®
National Community Reinvestment Coalition
National Housing Conference
NeighborWorks America
U.S. Conference of Mayors

¹ The 2008 HMDA Data: *The Mortgage Market during a Turbulent Year*,
<http://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/bulletin/2009/pdf/hmda08draft.pdf>