



# United Native American Housing Association

Jason Adams, Chairman

PO Box 38

Pablo, MT 59855

*"Tribes Helping Tribes"*

April 13, 2015

MAILED AND FAXED TO:

(202) 224-5429

Hon. John Barrasso, Chairman  
Hon. John Tester, Vice-Chairman  
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs  
838 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

MAILED AND FAXED TO:

(202) 224-5137

Hon. Richard Shelby, Chair  
Hon. Sherrod Brown, Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Banking,  
Housing, and Urban Affairs  
534 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for Specific Provisions of S. 710 Reauthorization of Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act

Dear Senators:

The United Native American Housing Association is a regional Indian housing organization comprised of 32 tribally designated housing entities (TDHEs) in Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and Montana. At our recent annual meeting in Denver, the UNAHA membership reviewed and voted on various provisions of S. 710 for the Reauthorization of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA). On behalf of our membership, most of whom are land-based, reservation, and treaty tribes located in remote rural areas, we would like to submit the following comments for consideration by your Committees.

1. Reauthorize NAHASDA. The TDHE members of UNAHA own or operate a majority of the housing units on most of the reservations in the Northern Plains area. Virtually all of the low-income homes owned and operated by our members were developed and are operated using funds from the NAHASDA Indian Housing Block Grant. We believe that NAHASDA should be reauthorized as soon as possible.
2. Removal of 30% Rule. Our members strongly support the language at Section 201 of S. 710 which would allow tribes to establish their own rent structures and eliminate mandatory compliance with the old 30% Rule. This change would be in line with the important self-determination provisions that have formed the foundation of this law for the last seventeen years.
3. Unspent Funds. Our members support the provision at Section 301 of S. 710 which would withhold funding from tribes who receive more than \$5 million a year and have more than three

#### UNAHA Board Members

Sharon Vogel-Vice Chairman  
Ghayenne River Housing Authority  
PO 480  
Eagle Butte, SD 57625

Iva Grainger - Secretary  
Fort Peck Housing Authority  
PO Box 667  
Poplar, MT 59255

Doug Yankton-Treasurer  
Spirit Lake Housing Corporation  
PO Box 187  
Fort Totten, ND 58335

Gauthier Agency LLC  
Administrator  
E3316 US HWY 93  
Ronan, MT 59864

years-worth of grant money unspent. This provision would potentially affect a handful of tribes and would allow funds to be allocated where low-income housing need is the greatest.

4. ONAP Assistant Secretary. Our members support Section 2 of the Bill calling for establishment of an Assistant Secretary for Native American programs within the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
5. Veterans' Supportive Vouchers. Our members support the provisions in Section 501 of the Bill which would establish a housing voucher program for Veteran's Supportive Housing (VASH). Native Americans serve in the military at the highest per capita rate of any other racial or ethnic group in the United States. The need to house and support the veterans in our communities as they return from service is huge.
6. There are also two provisions which the UNAHA members do not support and wish to see removed from the Senate Bill if possible:
  - a. Training & Technical Assistance. The provisions in Section 503 regarding the use of funds for training and technical assistance. Our members believe that Section 703 of the NAHASDA statute clearly mandate that all training and technical assistance money must go to a single national Indian housing organization who will develop, administer, and provide such training and assistance directly to tribes in the most efficient, relevant, and effective manner.
  - b. Affordability Restrictions on Homeownership Units. The provision in Section 203 which would remove certain affordability restrictions on homeownership units which have been converted from rental stock. We do not believe this is consistent with sustaining affordability requirements for the greatest number of units possible.

We very much appreciate this opportunity to submit comments to the Committees on this important legislation. We also hope that you can affirm your support for each of the issues and positions we have highlighted. We would be glad to answer any questions the Committee might have and/or provide more detailed information about the provisions we have commented on and about how NAHASDA plays a vital role for low-income housing development and operation on our members' reservations.

Sincerely,



Jason Adams  
Chairman

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