



MEDIA RELEASE

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A Tradition of Native American Housing

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Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, U.S. Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Census Bureau Address the NAIHC 2009 Legal Symposium

Support, partnership from Congress, Federal agencies is promised

LAS VEGAS, Nev.—December 9, 2009—The National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC), the only national Indian organization solely advocating on tribal housing, convened its annual Legal Symposium in Las Vegas, Nev. today with representatives from the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Census Bureau. All spoke on the importance of partnerships between Congress, Federal agencies and tribal governments.

“I am thankful to the Members of Congress who support tribal housing and tribal self-determination, and to our friends in the Federal agencies who have cooperated with us and have given NAIHC an opportunity to share—not just our views—but our aspirations,” said NAIHC Chairman Marty Shuravloff to an audience of Indian housing professionals. “This year’s Legal Symposium is especially important as we acknowledge some very significant achievements, milestones and advancements for Indian Country. Though, we can only accomplish our goals and objectives by being unified.”

In a video message, Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, echoed Chairman Shuravloff’s sentiment of the importance in working together to accomplish the goals set forth in the tribal housing industry.

“When we meet together, it is often the case that we talk about the same difficulties in tribal housing—homelessness, ill housing conditions, lack of resources—but don’t lose hope. It is my commitment that the First Americans have decent housing, and it is due to your work on the Housing Council, your relentless pushing to make sure the Congress does the right thing,” Sen. Dorgan said. “My work on the Indian Affairs committee will keep tribal housing issues at the

front of the agenda. In the next year we are going to have significant breakthroughs, and we need your help.”

Rodger J. Boyd, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Office of Native American Programs under the Public and Indian Housing at the HUD also addressed the plenary session. Boyd reported on HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan’s outreach and recent visits to tribal communities. Earlier this year, Sec. Donovan visited tribal communities in Montana and Alaska. Boyd emphasized that HUD is implementing President Barack Obama’s executive memorandum to all Federal departments to create a working consultation process with tribes. HUD is actively working with tribal leaders and tribal housing authorities to discuss current and reoccurring tribal housing issues, Boyd said.

Sydnee Chattin-Reynolds, Deputy Director of the Kansas City U.S. Census Bureau, expressed to the audience how essential partnerships between tribal communities and regional Census offices is needed for an accurate count of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the upcoming 2010 Census.

“The Census is active and we need your support. We want an accurate count and we know you all want an accurate count too,” Chattin-Reynolds said. “The bottom line is the tribal population listens to their local leadership not the U.S. Census Bureau.”

The NAIHC Legal Symposium will continue tomorrow with a HUD facilitated listening session on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Mercedes Marquez, Assistant Secretary of HUD’s Community Planning and Development, will also participate in the session. Also taking part in the session is Joe Garcia, Director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity at the U.S. Department of Energy.

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The National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) was founded in 1974 as a 501(c)(3) corporation. NAIHC is the only national organization representing housing interests of Native people who reside in Indian communities, Alaska Native Villages, and on native Hawaiian Home Lands.