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April 25, 2013

The Honorable Tim Johnson
United States Senate
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts
United States Senate
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson and Senator Roberts:

The one million members of the National Association of REALTORS® thank you for introducing S.766, to ensure that that rural communities continue to have access to valuable federal housing programs.

As a result of the 2010 Census, more than 900 communities may be ineligible for housing programs of the Rural Housing Service (RHS) due to changes in population or their designation as part of an Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). RHS programs such as the Section 502, 515, and 538 loan programs provide direct and guaranteed loans for both single and multifamily housing. Across rural America, these programs provide both rental and homeownership housing opportunities for rural families. As our economic and housing recovery continues, access to these programs is crucial.

Communities should not be excluded from rural housing programs because they have outgrown an arbitrary cap that has not been adjusted to reflect demographic trends in the last 38 years. It is important to note that this bill is revenue neutral. It does NOT expand funding levels for rural housing programs; it simply updates the pool of communities eligible for its services. Thank you again for introducing this important legislation. We stand ready to work with you on its passage to ensure that our rural citizens continue to have access to housing opportunities and financing appropriate to their needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Thomas'.

Gary Thomas
2013 President, National Association of REALTORS®



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