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September 10, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman, Senate Appropriations Committee
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Vice Chair Shelby:

The one million members of the National Association of REALTORS® urge you to protect rural communities in the FY 2014 Continuing Resolution and any FY 2014 Omnibus Appropriations bill.

As you know, there is language in both the FY 2014 House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations bills extending the definition of rural housing used by the Rural Housing Service (RHS). 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. Since its inception the Section 502 direct loan program alone has helped more than 2.1 rural families purchase a home. Without extending the definition, this program will be unavailable to more than 900 communities nationwide.

It appears unlikely that the FY 2014 Appropriations bills will become law before the September 30th expiration of the current definition. We urge you to include language addressing this issue in the FY 2014 Continuing Resolution so that rural Americans will continue to have access to housing opportunities and financing appropriate to their needs.

Sincerely,

Gary Thomas
2013 President, National Association of REALTORS®

cc: The Honorable Mark Pryor, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture; the Honorable Roy Blunt, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture



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