

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 11, 2014

The Honorable Shaun Donovan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street S.W.,
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Donovan:

We write today to urge you to consider immediately implementing regulatory and administrative relief measures for housing authorities across the country that are struggling to meet the needs of their residents and communities. In New England, these needs are growing as the demand for affordable housing is far outpacing supply. Respondents to the most recent New England Community Outlook Survey conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston reported access to affordable housing as the second-most challenging issue facing lower-income communities.

Currently, the wait list for Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers in Maine is larger than the number of issued vouchers. Housing authorities in Maine play a critically important role in the federal government's effort to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing for lower-income individuals and families who otherwise would be unable to afford market-rate housing. Their ability to serve the expanding group of citizens who most need assistance is severely constrained by a perfect storm of overregulation and administrative burdens, particularly given the overall budget constraints under which we now operate.

Based on advice and input from fifteen of our housing authorities in Maine, we believe that the Department could take steps to reduce the regulatory and administrative burdens imposed on housing authorities. In that light, we respectfully ask the Department to:

- Provide an update on the deliverables from the April 8, 2013, meeting between the Department and public housing industry groups.
- Identify what steps it has taken to date to reduce the time it takes to inform housing authorities of their Capital Fund allocations and what additional steps could be taken to reduce the time to 60 days.
- Affirm whether it has, in the context of improving effective oversight of PHAs, undertaken a review of its data collection requirements from housing authorities to determine if the Department is collecting the correct data and if some of data required to be submitted by housing authorities lacks an oversight justification

We believe that taking action on these items would significantly streamline the Department's operations and provide much-needed relief for housing authorities. We request your careful consideration of this matter, subject to all applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines, and ask that you please respond by April 30, 2014, to John Kane at John_Kane@collins.senate.gov and Lauren Pfingstag at Lauren_Pfingstag@king.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator