



Louisiana Housing Finance Agency

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House of Reps Committee Accepts Motion to Defer HB 223

LHFA contributes testimony on state of affordable housing

Baton Rouge, La. (June 6, 2007)- Today, the Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs Committee accepted a motion to voluntarily defer HB 223, which requires the approval of parish governing authorities prior to procedural action from the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency.

“The practical effect of HB 223 would be to slow, limit or otherwise restrict working families’ access to affordable housing,” said Milton Bailey, LHFA’s President. “I applaud the affordable and fair housing advocates that let their voices be heard today. I respect Representative Toomy’s decision to voluntarily defer the measure. I firmly believe we can overcome the citizens concerns through dialogue and active engagement and I look forward to those discussions.”

Stakeholders in support of this legislation proposed that it will address the concentration of affordable housing in rural and urban communities throughout the state. But key advocates against HB 223 voiced many concerns including the limiting of affordable housing development, violation of federal fair housing laws and the endangerment of federal funding for affordable housing developments.

James Gilmore, Vice President of LHFA gave informational testimony to the Committee. “82,000 rental properties were destroyed or damaged in hurricane impacted areas,” said Gilmore. “The LHFA is replacing 17,114 of those units, leaving 64,000 units blighted.”

“HB 223 has the potential to hinder affordable housing development during a critical time in hurricane recovery, said Gilmore. “ Now is not a time for discretionary power, but working together with local governments to design a plan for the best way to accommodate Louisiana residents with affordable housing needs.”

The Louisiana Housing Finance Agency (LHFA) was created by the Louisiana Legislature to address the shortage of safe and affordable housing in Louisiana. Since 1980, LHFA has administered federal and state funds through programs designed to advance the development of safe, energy- efficient and affordable housing for low and moderate income families. Post-Katrina, the LHFA has been a viable resource in the development of rental housing and homeownership finance opportunities.

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