

From: Jeffrey Sharkey [<mailto:jeffreysark@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, June 03, 2013 2:57 PM
To: Kevin Tatreau
Cc: Wellington Meffert; Gayle White
Subject: RFA Rule comment

Kevin

Hope all is well. I know you have been busy.

Please accept these comments to the proposed rule for the upcoming RFA funding process:

The issue relates to the priority set aside for the Area of Critical State Concern in the Florida Keys which does not appear in the current draft of the rule.

It was my understanding that FHFC had agreed to carry forward this priority from last year's 2013 draft rule into this year's RFA application process. During last year's rule making process, the set aside had been eliminated in an early version of the rule and then reinstated during the final version and it was my impression that the priorities in that process were to be retained in this years RFA process.

The importance of the affordable housing issue for the Florida Keys was underscored by passage of recent legislation in HB 437 that reinforced the need for priority funding for the Area of Critical State Concern.

To adopt rules prescribing a priority to fund affordable housing projects in the Florida Keys Area of Critical State Concern and the City of Key West Area of Critical State Concern where, due to challenging environmental, land use, transportation, workforce, and economic factors, it is extremely difficult to successfully finance, develop, and construct affordable housing.

I know the outpouring of comments last year from Monroe County elected officials and staff as well as leaders from Key West, Marathon, Key Largo and business groups were directed at the unique situation facing Monroe County from an affordable housing and economic sustainability perspective. They all strongly continue to believe that the current set aside commitment for this RFA cycle is critically important. The housing crisis continues to grow worse in the Keys with home prices rising, the demand for affordable rental housing reaching 2007 historic levels.

It would seem to make sense that this funding priority, like others, should be separated from the funding percentages allocated for small, medium and large counties; otherwise you are creating an unnecessary competition that would adversely affect other small counties.

Both the county and cities are currently working on trying to assemble acreage and assess environmental viability of several affordable housing projects and eliminating the set aside now would probably make these projects unsuccessful. This is a big economic sustainability issue for the business community and workforce in the Keys.

Thank you for your consideration for including the priority funding for the Area of Critical State Concern in this year's RFA process.

Jeff

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