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KATHLEEN M. MULLIN  
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May 15, 2013

Mr. Steve Auger  
Executive Director  
Florida Housing Finance Corporation  
227 North Bronough, Suite 5000  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

**RE: Tax Credit Allocation for Preservation/Rehab**

Dear Mr. Auger:

Through my work as Affordable Housing Project Attorney at Gulfcoast Legal Services, I see firsthand the daily struggle endured by extremely low income families in the Tampa Bay area when their housing is unstable. Properties that are receiving federal subsidies and are at risk of loss due to a profound need for repairs should be at the top of the FHFC list of priorities for federal tax credits.

The Shimberg Center for Housing Studies can provide you with the data that makes the case for preservation of existing project based housing as the greatest need in Florida. What I can provide to you is the success story of Norton Apartments, a 50 unit project based apartment community in Pinellas County. I represented the tenants at Norton Apartments. They were living in a property that was in such dire need of rehab that HUD was on the verge of terminating the project based subsidy and moving the families out. But aside from the need for repairs, this property in all other respects provided ideal housing for low income families. The project based subsidy enabled this population of working poor to provide stability for their children, housing in a good neighborhood, and close proximity to public transportation. In partnership with the Pinellas County Housing Authority, which purchased Norton out of bankruptcy from its prior owner, we were able to save the property (and its accompanying federal subsidy) using NSP funds. Norton now has an onsite computer lab for the adults and children as well as a family self sufficiency program which helps families obtain jobs, education, and savings to enable them to move up and out of subsidized housing. A full service recreation center operated next door by the City of Clearwater provides additional services to the Norton families.

But NSP funds are no longer available. The 9% federal tax credit monies are now more vital than ever in meeting Florida's need to preserve this irreplaceable

housing. I urge the FHFC to use the greater portion of its tax credit allocation for preservation/rehab of federally subsidized housing, and at a minimum to split the tax credit allocation 50-50 between preservation and new construction. At about one third the cost of constructing a new unit, preservation tax credits can keep housing affordable for many more Floridians than new construction.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine D. Allamanno". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "C".

Christine Allamanno