

News Release

National American Indian Housing Council



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NCAI President delivers ‘State of Indian Nations’ *40 percent of Native Americans are severely under housed; 10% lack safe drinking water*

WASHINGTON—February 2, 2006: In response to President Bush’s “State of the Union” address, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) President Joe Garcia delivered the fourth annual “State of Indian Nations” address emphasizing the critical needs in Indian Country from healthcare and education, to the inadequate state of housing.

“Housing conditions for many Indians have reached the crisis point. Four in ten Indians are under-housed. To avoid going homeless, many are forced to crowd several families into a single-family structure.” said Garcia. “I have seen up to 18 people in a small home.” Garcia continued that “One in eight lack safe drinking water and one in twelve lack basic sanitation.” Garcia emphasized that these conditions are “humiliating, degrading and medically unconscionable.” Mr. Garcia has tremendous experience in Indian housing, with his involvement in the first negotiated rulemaking of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA), which allows tribes as sovereign nations more leverage in solving their own housing shortage problems. As Garcia states since the inception of NAHASDA tribes are becoming homeowners at an increasing rate, 39 percent more from 1997 to 2001.

“Solving these homeownership disparities has been a mission the National American Indian Housing Council,” said Chester Carl, Chairman of NAIHC, “With the President aiming to cut 140 federal programs in FY 2007, we hope that the needs for Indian housing and Indian Country are clear. We must as a nation focus inward, so that the challenges we face today will not be felt seven generations from now.”

In the budget request that coincides with the address NCAI and NAIHC are requesting that the Native American Housing Block Grant (NAHBG) be funded at \$748 million and the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) be funded at \$77 million. NAIHC provides crucial onsite training and technical assistance to carry out the NAHBG and the ICDBG. NCAI is also asking in its budget request that NAIHC training and technical assistance funding be restored to \$4.6 million in FY 07.

“NAIHC’s training and technical assistance are pivotal in the success of NAHASDA by assisting tribes with the capacity to implement the block grant programs efficiently and effectively” said Gary Gordon, Executive Director of NAIHC. “We urge the President and Congress to restore this critical funding.”

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NAIHC assists tribes and tribal housing entities in reaching their self-determined goals of providing culturally relevant, decent, safe, sanitary, and quality affordable housing for Native people in Indian communities and Alaska Native villages.
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