

# News Release

National American Indian Housing Council



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## **NAIHC Chairman Testifies to Congress Seeking Reversal of HUD's Decision to Withhold NAHASDA Allocations**

**WASHINGTON—June 28, 2006—**In testimony today, the chairman of the **National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC)** urged the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to persuade the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to rescind its recent decision to withhold remaining FY 2006 block grant funds appropriated to 189 Indian housing authorities in the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) program.

**Marty Shuravloff, NAIHC Chairman** who is also Executive Director of **Kodiak Island Housing Authority in Alaska**, questioned HUD's legal authority to take such action. HUD's decision followed a U.S. district court ruling against HUD, which is trying to recover alleged overpayments of block grants made to Fort Peck Housing Authority (FPHA) from 1998 through 2002. He said the withholding would severely hamper tribal housing operations, causing undue hardship for the intended beneficiaries.

“Most tribal and tribally designated housing entity recipients are depending on such funding to continue operating and providing service to their low-income members, and such disruption of funding could lead to some completely shutting down,” said **Shuravloff**.

Further, he said, because many tribes have pledged their block grant funds as collateral to secure large government-backed loans, withholding would lead to default, which would severely damage the credit ratings of the tribes, and force American taxpayers to pay the bill.

The basis of HUD's asserted liability was FPHA's continued counting of, for block grant allocations purposes during the years at issue, FPHA-owned or -operated housing units that had already or should have been conveyed.

In its ruling against HUD, the Court invalidated a NAHASDA regulation deemed to be in conflict with the NAHASDA statute, which supports the housing interests of tribes. HUD is seeking a stay of the court decision.

—More—

*NAIHC Testimony on Fort Peck Decision*

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Shuravloff said **NAIHC** is eager to work with the committee on all issues affecting Indian housing programs, and an alternative solution must be found for the situation at hand.

“While we understand the difficulties presented by the Fort Peck decision, responding to what is a narrow decision possibly affecting only the Fort Peck Housing Authority by withholding funds for hundreds of tribes may be outside of HUD’s legal authority,” said **Shuravloff**.

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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.*

*NAIHC...“A Tradition of Native American Housing”*

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