

Housing Action NH
Building Alliances for Low Income Housing and Homelessness Advocacy
 www.housingactionnh.org

News and Legislative Update

At this time of *Crossover**, housing advocates are active at the State House on a number of issues. The House killed this year's challenge to the Workforce Housing Law. Meanwhile, an important opportunity to advance fair housing now lies with the Senate, and legislation promising regulatory improvements to ease the development of affordable housing have crossed over from the Senate to the House.

At the Federal level, there has been an uptick in congressional activity around housing finance reform and funding the National Housing Trust Fund with the introduction of the Johnson-Crapo bill in the Senate, and the beginnings of a FY '15 budget.

See below for more housing policy news and links to helpful resources.

**The period during the state legislative session when bills originating in one body cross over to the other; House Bills to the Senate, Senate Bills to the House.*

FEDERAL UPDATE

Housing Finance Reform. The US Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Chair Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Ranking Member Mike Crapo (R-ID) recently released the text of their bipartisan housing finance reform bill. The bill provides for potentially at least \$3.5 billion a year for the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF). The Johnson-Crapo bill is built on the framework of S. 1217, the Corker-Warner bill (see *Memo to Members, 6/28*), but is more favorable to the NHTF than the earlier bill.

Johnson-Crapo would increase the small state minimum for the distribution of NHTF to be the greater of \$10,000,000 or 1% of the NHTF allocation. The exception is if the initial capitalization to the NHTF is less than \$1 billion, in which case the small state minimum would be the greater of \$5,000,000 or 1% of the NHTF allocation. This is an increase from the current small state minimum of \$3,000,000. NH is a small-state minimum state.

The Johnson-Crapo bill would wind down Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and create a new Federal Mortgage Insurance Corporation (FMIC) to regulate the secondary mortgage market, similar to the way the FDIC regulates banks.

2015 Budget. After receiving the President Obama's budget request March 4, Congressional appropriators

began work on their FY '15 spending bills. House and Senate Appropriations Committees are now working to divide the total spending amount for the fiscal year among the 12 appropriations subcommittees, resulting in what are called the 302(b) allocations. Both the House and Senate Appropriations Committee chairs stated that they will proceed with establishing 302(b) subcommittee allocations within the FY15 spending caps, not the higher amount requested by the Administration. See <http://bit.ly/MLyt2i> for updated Federal budget charts.

Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure. H.R. 3543, the Permanently Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act (PTFA) now has 24 cosponsors, including NH Representative Carol Shea-Porter, and has been referred to the Committee on Financial Services. PTFA is the only federal protection for renters living in foreclosed properties, and provides these renters with the right to at least 90 days' notice before being required to move. If Congress does not act by the end of 2014, the law will expire. H.R. 3543 would remove the law's sunset date and would add a private right of action to the law as an enforcement mechanism. S. 1761, the Senate version of the legislation, is sponsored by Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT).

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Housing Credit. House Ways & Means Committee Chair Dave Camp (R-MI) released a discussion draft of a tax reform package that retains just three business tax expenditures – one of which is the Low Income Housing Tax Credit -- while eliminating all others in Federal Code. While the broad tax reform proposal is considered a non-starter this session, the fact that the Housing Credit survived in this proposal is cause for optimism, and may serve to inform the broader policy discussion about the importance of these credits and public-private partnerships to the development of affordable housing.

STATE UPDATE

Workforce Housing. HB 1297, the latest attempt to undermine the NH Workforce Housing Law, which had proposed requiring towns to receive approval by the local legislative body (i.e., town meeting or ballot) before applying for or accepting “workforce housing grants,” was killed on the House floor March 5. The Municipal and County Government Committee had unanimously recommended HB 1297 *inexpedient to legislate*, and the House adopted this recommendation without debate.

Fair Housing. HB 1409, sponsored by Representative Long, would improve the state policy landscape in NH by ending discriminatory rental practices against people with Section 8 vouchers and victims of domestic violence. HB 1409 was amended and passed the House by a slim but bipartisan [147-141](#) vote, and now heads to the Senate. The official state Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing has found that discriminatory practices against voucher holders and victims of domestic violence challenge fair housing in New Hampshire. HB 1409 would expand NH’s anti-discrimination statute to address the issue.

Landlord-Tenant Policies. HB 1336, the bill that would reinstate a \$500 fine for landlords who do not register a local contact with a municipality in which they own rental property, passed the House [155-122](#) with an amendment. The amendment enables (but does not require) municipalities to participate. It moves to the Senate. The House killed HB 1214, which proposed adding simple expiration of lease to the list of

“good causes” for eviction on a *Division* vote of 174-102. Individual votes are not tallied on a Division vote.

Regulatory Improvements. SB 387, sponsored by Senator Watters, modifies RSA 356-A, the Land Sales Full Disclosure Act, to streamline practices and broaden some exemptions to reduce development costs. The bill, as amended to exempt certain subdivided land from the registration and reporting requirements, had unanimous support in the Senate Public and Municipal Affairs Committee. It passed the full Senate on a voice vote and moves to the House. SB 393, also sponsored by Watters, has passed the Senate and is scheduled for a hearing in House Commerce April 3 at 2 PM. It would change RSA 204-C regarding developers return on equity, with the goal of getting property owners to re-capitalize.

Housing Study Commission. This Commission and its workgroups continue to convene. The next meeting, scheduled for **April 21 at 10:30 am**, will explore development barriers to building housing for extremely low-income households. Updates and info can be found at the Commission site <http://www.nhhfa.org/housing-data-state-planning-commission.cfm>.

Minimum Wage. Housing Action NH testified before the House Labor Committee about the current housing affordability challenges for NH workers earning the Federal minimum wage. HB 1403 would reinstate a state minimum wage, and increase it to \$9.00 an hour followed by COLA adjustments. According to the latest data (see Reports section), a current minimum wage worker in NH would need to work 111 hours a week to afford a 2-bedroom apartment at market rates. HB 1403 passed the House [173-118](#), and heads to the Senate.

Olmstead Settlement. HB 1635, a bill to fund some of the Olmstead lawsuit settlement, passed the House by a vote of [173-125](#) and has been assigned to the Senate Finance Committee. HB 1635 would appropriate \$517,458 for State Fiscal Year ‘14, and \$8,549,419 for State Fiscal Year ‘15 for DHHS to support rental subsidies and fund the creation of support teams for tenants with severe mental illness, as part of the state’s overall commitment to supporting at least 450 new housing units for that population by June 2016. The details of the full settlement are posted at <http://www.drcnh.org>.

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NEW REPORT

The 2014 Out of Reach report shows it takes \$20.18 an hour to afford a market-rate 2-bedroom apartment in NH. Published annually by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, this year's report finds that people in the Granite State face the 11th-highest housing costs in the nation. NH does not have its own minimum wage, and follows the Federal standard of \$7.25 an hour. In a high-housing cost state like NH, that means anyone working at that rate has to clock 111 hours per week to afford a decent place to live. Additional NH data can be found at <http://nlihc.org/oor/2014/NH>. For a national comparison, see <http://nlihc.org/oor/2014>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Housing Matters Workgroup -- Convened by Housing Action NH. Friday, April 11, 10 am in Concord. This group convenes monthly to learn, connect and share with a network of advocates united around affordable housing and ending homelessness. Open to any interested HANH member. Please contact Membership Coordinator Laurel Redden for details or to receive meeting notices at laurel@housingactionnh.org.

IMAGINE: National Low Income Housing Coalition's 2014 Housing Policy Conference and Lobby Day April 27-30 in Washington, DC. Housing Action NH will lead NH housing advocates for lobby day, part of this conference. Please contact Director Elissa Margolin at elissa@housingactionnh.org if you will attend. Additional information & registration at <http://nlihc.org/whatwedo/conference>

CONNECT WITH HOUSING ACTION NH

Housing Action NH is making it easier for members and advocates to locate information on housing and homelessness policy quickly. When you visit our newly refreshed website (www.housingactionnh.org), you'll see new information arranged by topic and searchable by keyword for easier look-ups, as well as the latest news or alerts right on our front page. We've also joined the social network on Twitter and Facebook. All of this aims to bring you more information, faster. Please take a moment now to follow us [@HousingActionNH](https://twitter.com/HousingActionNH) and like our Facebook page "[Housing Action NH](https://www.facebook.com/HousingActionNH)."

Please let us know how we can continue to make improvements that help you learn more, take action and share information with your networks about policies that affect NH.

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Is your organization one of Housing Action NH's members?

Housing Action NH is now more than 65 members strong and growing. Is your organization part of it? Know an organization that should join our network? It's simple to join: download, complete and return our one-page member form available at <http://housingactionnh.org/take-action/become-a-member/>. Already a member on the list below? Consider forwarding the link to a colleague at another organization or business you work with.

For more information, contact Membership Coordinator Laurel Redden at <mailto:laurel@housingactionnh.org>.

ABOUT HOUSING ACTION NH

Housing Action NH was created to build and coordinate alliances in effective advocacy for strong federal and state investment in the preservation of existing affordable housing, the development of new affordable housing, rental subsidies for low income families and strong policies and funding to serve the homeless and end homelessness. For more information about our work, see www.housingactionnh.org.

HOUSING ACTION NH MEMBERS: AHEAD, Inc., Avesta Housing, Anagnost Companies, American Friends Service Committee, Belknap-Merrimack Community Action Program, Elizabeth Blanchard, CATCH Neighborhood Housing, Citizens Housing and Planning Association, Centrix Bank, Kelli Magowan Cicirelli, Cross Roads House, Dakota Partners, Inc., Attorney John Deachman, Dover Housing Authority, Eastern Lakes Region Housing Coalition, Every Child Matters in NH, Fellowship Housing Opportunities, Inc., Families in Transition, Family Connections Resource Center, The Friends Program, The Front Door Agency, Granite State Independent Living, Granite State Organizing Project, Great Bridge Properties, Greater Nashua Mental Health Center, Greater Nashua Workforce Housing Coalition, Harbor Homes, Inc., The Hartland Group, Home Builders and Remodelers Association of NH, Homeless Shelter for Strafford County, Housing Initiatives of New England, The Housing Partnership, Keene Housing Authority, Laconia Area Community Land Trust, Laconia Housing Authority, Kimberly Lasser, League of Women Voters NH, Lutheran Social Services, Manchester Housing Authority, Ignatius MacLellan, Marguerite's Place, My Friend's Place, Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter, NeighborWorks Southern New Hampshire, Nesseralla & Company, NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, NH Coalition to End Homelessness, NH Community Development Finance Authority, NH Community Loan Fund, NH Council of Churches, New Hampshire Housing, NH Legal Assistance, Northern New England Housing Investment Fund, Portsmouth Housing Authority, The Salvation Army – Portsmouth Post, Seacoast Family Promise, Sheehan Phinney Bass + Green PA, Maria Sillari, Consultant, Society of St. Vincent de Paul Exeter, Southern NH Services, Southwestern Community Services, Stewart Property Management, Barbara Thorngren, Twin Pines Housing Trust, United Valley Interfaith Project, The Way Home, Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast, Working Families Win NH