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CONTACT: Katy Gorman
202-580-7223
kgorman@nahro.org

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials Releases Statement on Agreement to Increase the Nations’ Debt Ceiling

The following statement was issued on behalf of Saul N. Ramirez Jr. CEO of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials

Washington, D.C. (August 3, 2011) - NAHRO is encouraged to see that a final agreement has been signed by the President to increase the nations’ debt ceiling. For members of NAHRO however, this agreement does not respond to, or sharpen the focus on, the central issue for housing and redevelopment authorities and agencies today-- whether sufficient amounts of resources will be available to meet the nation’s longstanding housing and community development needs.

The spending caps called for in this agreement freeze already inappropriate spending levels which for years have diminished the ability of local authorities to address unmet needs, put current recipients of federal assistance at risk of losing their assistance, and left those in need of support out in the cold.

In short, the agreement does nothing to enable housing authorities and redevelopment agencies to address a reported $26 billion backlog in public housing capital needs and billions in disinvested neighborhoods, nothing to enable housing authorities to get Section 8 voucher assistance to homeless vets and others on the street, and does nothing to empower local governments to revitalize neighborhoods, build new affordable housing and/or provide ongoing services to seniors and children in need.

NAHRO recognizes the overall need and the collective will to get the nation’s fiscal house in order but such efforts in the past have disproportionately impacted discretionary spending accounts that assist the most vulnerable in our society. The debt ceiling agreement should be viewed in its totality and in full measure as it impacts upon the work of House and Senate Appropriators who face impractical decisions affecting the full range of nation’s domestic needs.
from transportation infrastructure to the homeless. We can only hope that in today’s environment, from which this agreement was created, fiscal restraint will not overpower and overshadow the will of this nation to responsibly finance and house those in need in safe, quality communities any citizen would be proud to call home.

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, established in 1933, is a membership organization of over 20,000 housing and community development agencies and professionals throughout the United States whose mission is to create affordable housing and safe, viable communities that enhance the quality of life for all Americans, especially those of low- and moderate-income. NAHRO’s membership administers more than 3 million housing units for 7.6 million people.

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