

Joint Resolution

Vermont Council on Homelessness and Vermont Housing Council

WHEREAS, the cumulative effect of federal budget reductions, across-the-board cuts and sequestration is having a direct and immediate impact on Vermonters who rely on these programs for stable housing; and

WHEREAS, the availability of affordable housing helps prevent family instability and long term social service costs while the construction and rehabilitation of affordable homes are important economic development and community building tools; and

WHEREAS, the loss of Section 8 housing assistance vouchers means 774 fewer Vermont families will be able to secure housing this year; and

WHEREAS, uncertainty around federal budgeting and contracts for rental assistance threatens affordability for residents, destabilizes the operations of affordable housing projects, negatively impacts investor interest and reduces the private equity Vermont developers can use to create more affordable homes; and

WHEREAS, declining federal Emergency Solutions Grant funding to operate emergency shelters jeopardizes this critical backstop at the very time more families and individuals will be forced to turn there for short-term shelter due to the loss of federal assistance for permanent housing; and

WHEREAS, Vermont is focused on how to target its housing services and resources, including creating alternatives to motel stays and piloting new supportive housing initiatives, homelessness prevention activities and rental subsidy programs to serve the most vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government must meet its responsibility to protect the most vulnerable and hold its commitment to those programs that serve them; and

WHEREAS, uncertainty and congressional inaction threaten to undo and overwhelm these efforts leading to more homelessness and the associated personal and social costs.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Vermont Housing Council and the Vermont Council on Homelessness urge local, state and national leaders to join them in calling on the U.S. Congress to return to program-based budgeting and prioritize the restoration of funding to critical HUD and USDA programs that provide affordable housing, shelter and prevent homelessness for Vermont's most vulnerable households rather than relying upon shut downs, sequestration and across-the-board cuts to determine spending levels.

Approved by the Vermont Housing Council on October 22, 2013

Approved by the Vermont Council on Homelessness on October 24, 2013