U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: House Floor Vote on T-HUD FY 2015 Appropriations Bill

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I urge you to oppose the T-HUD bill when it comes to a vote in the House. The bill as reported seriously underfunds a number of key priorities.

On behalf of our AFSCME members working in public housing authorities and the residents we serve, we understand the value of federal funding for public housing – especially adequate funding for the Public Housing Operating Fund and the Public Housing Capital Fund. There is an urgent need for additional funding to ensure that Public Housing Authorities have the resources needed to operate, preserve, and enhance the public housing stock as well as provide residents with appropriate services. Without new funding, the 2.6 million Americans residing in public housing’s 1.1 million units would have no place to live.

The Committee bill flat funds the Public Housing Operating Fund at the FY 2014’s level. Additional funding is also needed for the Operating Fund to meet current needs. Anything below full funding weakens Housing Authorities’ ability to serve existing residents, lengthens waiting lists, and causes budget shortfalls and related problems. The Committee bill also cuts the Public Housing Capital Fund by $100 million below current FY 2014’s level at a time when additional funding is needed to meet current accrual needs and reduce the huge capital needs backlog.

Funding levels for the Department of Transportation in the bill are not adequate to meet the country’s infrastructure needs and amount to a $727.3 million cut to discretionary spending for the current year. The funding level is $5.8 billion less than the administration’s proposal, which is the minimum needed to meet current needs, particularly at a time when infrastructure throughout the country is literally crumbling. The Committee-approved bill also makes significant cuts in TIGER grants (down to $100 million from $600 million) and to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – new starts are cut by $252 million. Reductions in transit spending place a heavy burden on state and local budgets.

While the Federal Aviation Administration has received a small increase in funding for operations, we note that overall funding is still below the FY 2014
enacted level. There is a great need for increased investment in the nation’s airports, especially in their safety, rehabilitation and maintenance requirements.

As reported from the Committee, the bill is inadequate and we urge you to oppose it.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Charles M. Loveless
Director of Federal Government Affairs

CML:MG:mc