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THUD REMARKS

Thank you, Chairman Price, Ranking member Diaz-Balart, for hosting this member day today.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify about my priorities and concerns as representative of Washington state's 8th congressional district. Washington state has a diverse set of housing, transportation and development needs. Washington's 8th District, my district, depends on a variety of programs to keep our communities housed, connected, and healthy.

I am submitting a longer letter to address all of these concerns, but I would like to highlight a few for you today:

First, I want to bring your attention to two important projects in my district. First is the **Senior Hub Facility Improvements** in Enumclaw. The funding for this program would be used for revitalization of the Enumclaw Senior Center. This building has housed programs for seniors since 1983, although the building itself dates back to 1927. The program has grown from one daily meal, to a robust variety of programs and services that meet the needs of a growing aging population. With these grant funds, the program can make needed physical structure and safety improvements, including Earthquake Structural improvements, replacement of outdated window glass, and safe and ADA accessible entrances. Enumclaw Senior Center is used heavily by older adults and their families. The Center also serves seniors who are homebound, as the only site in King and Pierce counties providing hot, home delivered meals. Seniors are often isolated at home, and Senior Centers like this one support healthy aging in place and provide important social opportunities for seniors.

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The second project I would like to highlight is **A Place 4 Alice** in Leavenworth, WA. This project funds affordable housing that will be preserved as affordable housing through a land trust designation. Future buyers gain access to affordable housing and maintain the property. In addition to the housing itself, these funds will support the construction and rehabilitation of a playground, sports fields, and a pool that will serve the broader community. Nearly half of residents in the three communities that are served by this project are living in poverty or Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE), *and* the median rent burden is disproportionately high relative to the rest of the state. A Community Needs Assessment identified access to healthy, year-round recreation as a community need. This investment of federal dollars would produce three workforce housing units, 1-2 sports fields, one ADA playground, and one year-round pool. The project creates 16 to 24 permanent jobs. Through a pilot YouthBuild program, A Place 4 Alice aims to train 8-14-year-olds in construction trades, leading to 1-4 permanent jobs. Additionally, the newly expanded pool programming will lead to 15-20 permanent positions.

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These types of community investments are important not only for housing, but for the connective services that housing provides. By investing in a place for seniors to break bread and socialize, we help improve their quality of life. By providing low-income families with access to a playground and pool, we create both jobs and an opportunity to socialize, exercise, and build community.

My district and Washington State as a whole desperately need more housing. Today, Washington state has a shortage of 157,461 rental homes, over 5,000 of which are in my district. We also, specifically, need support for Veteran housing programs, as there are more than 1,500 homeless veterans in Washington state. I firmly believe that it is our responsibility to ensure that those who devoted their lives to protecting our country have stable housing and quality health care. That's why I am supportive of the **HUD VASH** program. The program combines rental assistance, in the form of a HUD voucher, with case management and supportive services through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). By combining services, the HUD-VASH program helps homeless veterans regain self-sufficiency and addresses the factors that led to their homelessness in the first place.

In January 2020, in total, Washington received 265 HUD-VASH vouchers, more than half of those awarded to our entire four state region of Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. This is a critical program.

Finally, as a pediatrician and a mom, I am concerned about lead poisoning of children in their own homes. The CDC estimates that 535,000 children aged one to five years old in the U.S. have blood levels above 5 micrograms per deciliter, the reference level at which the CDC recommends public health actions be initiated. Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health, including damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems, and hearing and speech problems. We need to invest in Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes to prevent, identify, and mitigate lead contamination in our communities.

Thank you for your leadership during this process and for attention to the needs of my District. I yield back the balance of my time.