



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410-0001

January 20, 2012

THE SECRETARY

Dear Sustainable Communities Initiative Grantees:

As you know, I believe that an emphasis on sustainability is the way to a prosperous future for America. That is why I was so pleased and excited by the energy and enthusiasm that you all brought to our recent Sustainability Grantee convening. Seeing such a diverse range of communities working in collaborative partnerships to engage in smarter planning at a regional scale was inspiring. We all understand that the challenges facing our communities do not adhere to jurisdictional boundaries. To tackle them effectively, we must take a regional approach.

The critical importance of regional solutions is why I am writing to strongly encourage that you use this grant opportunity to produce a unified Regional Analysis of Impediments (Regional AI), which addresses the fair housing impediments for each jurisdiction and the region rather than a series of jurisdiction-level analyses. Working together on a well-crafted Regional AI improves the efficiency and has the potential to reduce the cost of the AI process. In addition, your requirement to complete a Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA) provides an excellent opportunity to do this.

While the leap from the FHEA to the Regional AI might sound like extra work, the gap is actually quite small and does not entail any special processes. You simply build on your FHEA in several areas as outlined in the accompanying memoranda, and HUD will provide direct technical assistance to make it easier for you to conduct your analysis. The burden in transitioning from a FHEA to a Regional AI will be manageable, so I hope you seize this opportunity to innovate and address regional planning issues more effectively.

Our staff in the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity is working diligently with the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities to ensure that those of you who pioneer with us will have what you need to complete the Regional AI efficiently. We will distribute guidance for the Regional AI and conduct a series of webinars through March to provide further clarity, and your Government Technical Representative will check in with you after the final webinar to gauge your interest in opting in. I invite you all to explore this opportunity with us as we move this regional approach forward. I welcome any feedback and questions, and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shaun Donovan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shaun Donovan