

FLORIDA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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D. MICHAEL MCCARRON, PH.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



February 16, 2009

Senator J. D. Alexander
412 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: Further Cuts in Florida Housing Finance Corporation Funding

Dear Senator Alexander,

Thank you for your service to the citizens of Florida. Your role as Chairman of the Policy and Steering Committee on Ways and Means is certainly challenging in these difficult economic times.

During the past several years, I have had the opportunity to meet with you regarding the needs of farmworkers. One specific area of concern is the availability of adequate housing, affected by the capacity of non-profits to deal with governmental regulations and funding entities.

The Florida Housing Finance Corporation has always set aside funding for special needs populations such as the farmworkers, homeless, disabled, etc. who are not considered very attractive for development by for profit companies. Because of their need for technical assistance and the length of time required to assemble adequate sources of funding, the non profits often need more time to bring these projects to fruition.

It is our understanding that Florida Housing Finance Corporation, while implementing the special session \$190 million dollar cut to their budget, worked to hold these special needs groups harmless. However, given the specter of additional cuts, we are alarmed at the potential devastation to projects in process. Casa San Juan Bosco, to be built in DeSoto County, is at risk of losing \$4 million in SAIL funding that is desperately needed in the funding package for 97 farmworker housing units.

In questioning the overall operation of Florida Housing Finance Corporation in regards to deploying committed funding to projects, we applaud the Corporation's caution in assuring that their funding, whether to for profit companies or non profit corporations, is not released until all funding sources have been verified and finalized to prevent the loss of state funds.

We pray for you as you continue this difficult task of looking at revenue sources and cutting costs to reach a balanced budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila S. Hopkins". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Sheila S. Hopkins

Associate Director for Social Concerns/Respect Life

cc: President Jeff Atwater, Florida Senate
D. Michael McCarron, Executive Director, Florida Catholic Conference