

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted today to reauthorize and improve the HOPE VI program for the next eight years – authorizing nationwide up to \$800 million a year for housing projects similar to the Cornhill revitalization in Utica, NY.

“We have seen first-hand the positive impact HOPE VI can have on neighborhoods and communities in need,” **Arcuri said**. “In Utica, we have already immensely benefited from HOPE VI funding and continue to see encouraging results. I am proud that today’s bill not only reauthorizes HOPE VI, but makes key improvements to increase local input. This legislation includes increased resident participation and community oversight to meet local needs.”

In 2003, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development approved a HOPE VI Revitalization Grant in the amount of \$11,501,039 to the Utica Municipal Housing Authority (UMHA) to demolish the Washington Courts public housing complex and develop replacement housing for existing residents.

“One of the main goals of HOPE VI is an overall improvement in the quality of life for our citizens,” **Utica Mayor David R. Roefaro said**. “The reauthorization of this national program speaks volumes for what we can achieve regionally when working together. For Utica HOPE VI means more sustainable communities, a better quality of life, and citizens who can benefit from the improvements of our entire city.”

Since its establishment in 1992, the HOPE VI Revitalization Grant program has awarded 237 grants to 127 cities. In HOPE VI projects, every government dollar has leveraged at least two private sector dollars.

The HOPE VI Reauthorization and Improvement Act (H.R. 3524) contains numerous improvements which will strengthen the program. These improvements include enhancing the active involvement and participation of residents in the planning process and ensuring that public housing agencies inform residents regarding all stages of the grant and application process

H.R 3524 Would:

- Enhance resident involvement and community input. The bill provides for the active involvement and participation of residents in the grant planning process, including public hearings and four notices to residents on: 1) the intent to apply for a HOPE VI grant; 2) grant award and relocation options; 3) grant agreement and relocation options; and 4) replacement housing.
- Requires that all public housing units proposed for demolition or disposition under a HOPE VI project be replaced on a one-for-one basis. It also requires public housing agencies to provide a mixed-income housing development on the site of the original public housing location in a manner resulting in a decrease in the concentration of poverty.
- Expand housing opportunities by providing residents displaced by a HOPE VI project with three housing choices: a revitalized unit on the site of the original public housing location; a revitalized unit in the jurisdiction of the public housing agency; or a housing choice voucher, which can be used in areas with lower concentrations of poverty.
- Promote green housing by requiring all HOPE VI replacement housing be built in accordance with the national Green Communities criteria checklist or a substantially equivalent standard. Green Communities is a widely-utilized industry standard for green affordable housing and is already required or used by a number of cities and states across the country.
- Require public housing agencies to monitor and track all households affected by HOPE VI revitalization plans and develop a thorough temporary relocation plan.
- Establish performance benchmarks to ensure the timely completion of HOPE VI grants and provides penalties for grantees that do not meet these performance benchmarks.

Last week, Arcuri announced that the Utica Municipal Housing Authority (UMHA) was awarded a \$136,500 grant through HSBC bank from the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York (FHLB) Affordable Housing Program to help local families access affordable home loans for 21 planned units in the Oneida Homes phase of the HOPE VI project.

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