



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 11, 2016

The Honorable Julian Castro
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Secretary Castro:

I write to invite you and members of your staff to visit the City of Wilson, North Carolina to see firsthand the positive impact of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) assistance. I also hope to discuss prospects to reduce blight in the city and surrounding area, as the community faces significant challenges with more than 300 blighted properties. This visit will build on the conversation your Washington and Greensboro Field Office staff had with City officials and my staff in January.

Wilson is a growing metropolitan area with nearly 50,000 residents and is an increasingly important hub in the eastern North Carolina region. The Wilson Housing Authority (WHA) was recently recognized by HUD as a “high performer,” receiving 94 out of 100 possible points for its public housing assessment. The WHA owns and operates 750 public housing units and administers over 600 Section 8 vouchers, with an annual budget of \$7.5 million, generated from HUD funding and tenant rental income.

The WHA was recently awarded a \$200,000 planning grant from HUD under the New Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Program that was matched by WHA and the City of Wilson. Also, \$500,000 in funds from HUD’s Community Development Block Grant Program will assist in the conversion of a local grocery store into a retail pharmacy that will also carry home medical supplies. I am excited about the community development, job creation, and improved quality of life made possible by the partnership of the WHA, the City of Wilson, and HUD and know you will be impressed by the work being done on the ground.

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However, Wilson still faces significant challenges with several hundred blighted properties. Using funds from HUD's Capital Fund Program, WHA renovated over 20 units that were previously uninhabitable due to foundation issues. While this is a step in the right direction, it is clear that more assistance is needed to eradicate blight in Wilson.

As WHA and the City of Wilson continue to search for ways to make affordable housing more accessible and to eliminate blight, I hope you will accept this invitation to see how HUD is an important partner in those efforts. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Dennis Sills on my staff at 202.225.3101.

Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. K. Butterfield".

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

cc: Mr. Rodger Lentz, Chief Planning and Development Officer, City of Wilson, North Carolina