

CONSENT CALENDAR
July 16, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Housing Advisory Commission

Submitted by: Stephen Murphy, Chairperson, Housing Advisory Commission

Subject: Support Maintaining HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program at Pre-

Sequestration Levels

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution supporting the continuing of pre-sequestration levels of funding for the Housing Choice Voucher Program and send copies to Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Housing Choice Voucher Program is an invaluable resource to assist low-income families afford housing in Berkeley. These vouchers are provided directly to low-income households to subsidize rents. The vouchers are also provided to affordable housing developments and provide additional rent revenue to support operations. Due to sequestration impacts on the federal budget, the Berkeley Housing Authority has recently suspended its Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process to award additional Project Based Housing Vouchers to proposed affordable housing projects that have already received financial commitments from the City of Berkeley. Furthermore, other local housing authorities in the State of California are considering reducing the amount of housing choice voucher payments to low-income households currently receiving subsidies to pay rents. These reductions could be in the range of \$150 - \$200 per month.

At its May 2, 2013 meeting, the Housing Advisory Commission unanimously passed a motion to recommend that City Council adopt a resolution to send to Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer asking them to continue pre-sequestration levels of funding for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (M/S/C. Wolfe/Soto-Vigil. Ayes: Feller, Kingeter, McDonald, Murphy, Sawicki, Soto-Vigil, Wolfe. Noes: None. Excused Absence: Casalaina. Absent: Skjerping).

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

While sequestration has officially been in effect since March 1, 2013, its impacts are now being realized. Without public response to these across the board cuts, our political leaders in Washington may not understand how these cuts affect vulnerable populations.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

No alternative actions were considered.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position the content and recommendations of the Commission's Report.

CONTACT PERSONS

Kristen Lee, Community Services Specialist III, HHCSD, (510) 981-5427 Marian Wolfe, Vice-Chair, Housing Advisory Commission, (510) 548-8229

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

SUPPORT FOR MAINTAINING HUD'S HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM AT PRE-SEQUESTRATION LEVELS

WHEREAS, the Housing Choice Voucher Program is an invaluable resource to assist low-income families afford housing in Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, the vouchers are also provided to affordable housing developments and provide additional rent revenue to support operations due to sequestration impacts on the federal budget, the Berkeley Housing Authority has recently suspended its Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process to award additional Project Based Housing Vouchers to proposed affordable housing projects that have already received financial commitments from the City of Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, furthermore, other local housing authorities in the State of California are considering reducing the amount of housing choice voucher payments to low-income households currently receiving subsidies to pay rents.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley supports maintaining HUD's Housing Choice Voucher Program at pre-sequestration levels.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer asking them to continue pre-sequestration levels of funding for the housing choice voucher program.