

Mixed Signals on NHTF in Senate Jobs Bill

January 29, 2010

from NLIHC's Memo to Members

Senate leaders continue to figure out what form their jobs initiative will take. Last week, 25 Senators sent a letter to Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Byron Dorgan (D-ND) requesting that the bill include \$1 billion to capitalize the National Housing Trust Fund and \$65 million for project-based vouchers to be coupled with NHTF capital dollars (see Memo, [1/ 22](#)). This would match the provisions in the House jobs bill passed in December (see Memo, [12/18/2009](#)).

Initial reports were that the Senate bill would include just a few large-scale programs and that the NHTF was too small to be included. But by the end of the last week in January, Senate sources were reporting that what would be included in the jobs bill was still in flux. There may be a series of smaller “jobs” bill, instead of one big one, to help get enough votes for the component parts. Chances are quite good that the NHTF funds would be included in this strategy, given the extensive support for the NHTF in the Senate.

Even if the Senate fails to account for the NHTF in any of its bills, any Senate jobs bill that passes will have to be conferenced with the House bill. In that case, the fact that the NHTF is a top priority for Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank (D-MA) bodes well for attaining the first dollars for the NHTF in the near future.