

Testimony for hearing on March 24, 2006 of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity.

Submitted by Dorothy Montgomery, Muskingum County Commissioner.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. It is a pleasure to speak to you about the use of CDBG funds in Muskingum County. My fellow County Commissioners and I are concerned about the proposed cuts to the program and I would like to share some of those concerns with you today.

In Muskingum County, we have been fortunate to complete many worthwhile projects with CDBG funds. Just since 2000, we have installed water lines, completed storm sewer improvements and sanitary sewer improvements, paved roads, installed and repaired sidewalks, renovated parks and repaired and installed culverts.

With the approximately \$200,000 that Muskingum County receives each year, we are able to reach out to various townships and villages in the county to address some of their most urgent needs. These areas, which are struggling economically, would not be able to complete the majority of these very necessary projects without the assistance of CDBG funds. This year, we are planning to complete six projects in six different parts of the county. These infrastructure improvements will have an affect on hundreds of Muskingum County residents.

Infrastructure is not the only area where CDBG funding has an impact. CDBG programs also stimulate the domestic economy by creating jobs and expanding home ownership, which empowers struggling neighborhoods. This is important since there is a direct correlation between the condition of housing and the performance of our youth in school which has a long lasting impact upon society as a whole.

The reduction in the amount of allocated funds granted to Muskingum County will certainly affect the nature, scope and number of projects that we will be able to undertake in the future. From expanding water lines to repairing roads and sidewalks, CDBG funds have been used to improve neighborhoods and change lives. Our community will most certainly feel the ill effects as a result of these proposed cuts. My fellow County Commissioners and I, along with our CDBG Coordinator, would greatly encourage you to support the CDBG program in its current state and reject any proposed funding cuts.

Thank you.