TESTIMONY FOR THE RECORD
WAYNE TAYLOR, JR., CHAIRMAN, THE HOPI TRIBE
TO THE SUBCOMMITTE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MAY 3, 2004

Honorable Members of the United States Congress, Honorable Tribal Chairmen, Invited Guests, and our Navajo and Hopi Tribal members, Welcome.

My name is Wayne Taylor, Jr. and I am Chairman of the Hopi Tribe.

My remarks today focus on the need to increase the opportunities for Hopi people to live in quality and affordable housing and to improve our participation under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA). In addition, I will offer my thoughts on some of the critical legislative and policy issues related to housing that require the attention of our Congressional Delegation.

By way of background, the Hopi people and their ancestors have lived in Northern Arizona and the southwest in general for many thousands of years. Our ancestors' once thriving but now abandoned villages can be found throughout portions of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah. In 1882, the United States set aside a small portion of our former ancestral home as a reservation intended as a permanent home and abiding place for the Hopi. The Hopi Village of Oraibi was a bustling community many centuries before the coming of the European explorers and today is recognized as the oldest continuously inhabited community in North America. Our Reservation—some 1.6 million acres of land—is situated in the middle of the Arizona portion of the Navajo Reservation. The 12 villages of the Hopi Reservation are within a two-hour drive of the non-Indian Border towns of Flagstaff, Winslow and Holbrook. We are cross-town neighbors to the Navajo community at Tuba City. According to the most recent population data, the Hopi Tribe has an on-reservation population of 8,000 tribal members with another 4,000 members living off the reservation. Our labor force population is 5,222 and we have an unemployment rate of 62%. The average household income for families in the Hopi communities is $26,543, which is almost $6,870 less than the income

for neighboring non-Indian communities in Coconino and Navajo counties. These statistics are taken from the most current United States Census data and the Tribe's Enrollment database.

The Hopi have a long history of housing development. As settled village dwellers, the Hopi built and maintained community development projects throughout the thousands of years of their history preceding the founding of the United States. Hopi communities were designed and constructed not simply as shelter from the elements, but rather as places of safety and social cohesion. The Hopi village was a place where individual families could live comfortably, practice their agrarian economy, attend to their religious obligations and build a society that took care of its community members and offered them a clear direction toward future security and prosperity. Anyone visiting Hopi villages today will see Hopi homes, built by Hopi hands that that have been passed down through family and clan inheritance for many hundreds of years. Generations of Hopi people have literally been born, raised and passed on in Hopi Housing built by their ancestors. Unfortunately, our ability to keep pace with the need for new housing through modern housing programs has not come close to matching the ingenuity and adaptability of our ancestors. Hopi people simply do not have sufficient quality and affordable housing to meet existing and projected needs.

Housing is currently one of the greatest challenges facing the Hopi people. Housing development faces a number of challenges. Finding suitable locations for new housing can be extremely difficult because of our system of village and clan land holdings that restricts the building of new homes in close proximity to the historic villages and reserves much of the land for agricultural and religious practices. Of course, this is a matter within the political control of the Hopi Tribe and its villages and will have to be worked out according to those political processes. Our solution is to move new housing into areas not subject to such restrictions, however in such locations we face the difficulty of developing basic infrastructure (water, sewer, electricity, and roads), and the lack of funds for construction activity. As our Hopi population grows and, the demand for housing increases, we fear these problems will only become worse.

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The Hopi Tribe is an active participant in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs. The Hopi Tribal Housing Authority (HTHA) was created in 1966 as a public body of the Hopi Tribe. This year, 2004, marks the 37th year of operation with over 300 housing units under HTHA management. These housing units consist of 320 Mutual Help and NAHASDA units located on the reservation and 33 Low Rent homes located on Hopi trust property near Winslow Arizona. In addition, there are more than 1,100 HUD houses in the homeowners program. The Hopi Tribal Council appoints a five-member Board of Commissioners that governs the HTHA. The Board is responsible for policy creation and implementation, and the general operating responsibilities of HTHA through Hopi Tribal Ordinance 15. We are the first to admit that a construction of a mere 1200 to 1400 homes over 37 years is not a stellar performance, especially when you consider the scope of the unmet housing need.

The statistics [illegible]ted to affordable housing for the Hopi Tribe are disturbing and discouraging. According to recent surveys conducted by the Hopi Tribal Housing Authority, there are 2,485 families living on the Hopi Reservation of which 2,043 are low-income; 1,215 Hopi families live in sub-standard housing units and nearly 691 families live in over-crowded conditions, usually sharing the same household with other family members. The same survey shows that there are 1,116 owner-occupied units and 137 renter occupied units under the HUD housing program for total units of 1,253. The statistics for these 1,253 units are startling but not surprising: Of the 1,253 units, 436 are in standard condition; 337 require minor rehabilitation; 439 require substantial rehabilitation; 29 are dilapidated and require replacement; and 10 are of unknown structural condition. Financial assistance is badly needed to repair and rehabilitate 773 units and to rebuild 29 new units. (Source: HTHA IHP 2004). The above statistics apply only to the HTHA Indian Housing Plan for 2004.

The need for affordable housing applies equally throughout Hopi lands. Walpi Housing Program, with 73 units under their program, reports that they have a waiting list of 45-50 individuals wanting housing at their location. On the average, Walpi Housing Office

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receives up to six (6) calls per month from people wanting housing for their families. There is dire need for rental units for Hopi individuals who have no place to go because their family housing is already crowded or because they have no village lands to build upon.

The following statement is startling: ***It will take the Hopi people 123 years to meet the current demands for housing that is a result of overcrowded conditions***. This is not a worst-case scenario; this is the current trend. It was included by the HTHA in their 2004 IHP report.

What is the Hopi tribal government doing about these housing concerns? A number of years ago, the Hopi Tribal Council approved a Comprehensive Land Use Plan and within this plan designated five (5) new community sites to be located on the Hopi Partitioned Lands. One such site is the Tawaovi Community. The new community of Tawaovi is located 15 miles north of Second Mesa along BIA route 4, also known as the Turquoise Trail. The Tawaovi Community provides for mixed used housing, commercial and industrial development, ranching and farming, and other government facilities. We are working with the local Housing Authority to plan new housing for these communities. We need congressional support to make the plans a reality.

The Hopi Tribal Council is addressing additional challenges. A streamlined process regarding the BIA's leasing policies and the use of HUD's format of NEPA compliance documents need to be addressed also. Alternate sources of funding will be explored and pursued. Local policy can be changed to accommodate these new changes. Cooperation between the HTHA, the Hopi Tribe, the State of Arizona, and the various agencies that provide services regarding housing, infrastructure development, financing, and homeownership needs to be established.

I would like to take a moment to suggest several legislative remedies that can serve to integrate tribal housing development opportunities to help us better serve the basic needs of our Hopi people.

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I. Indian Health Service – Public Law 86-121.

Under NAHASDA, Indian Health Service is not required to review the feasibility of proposed sites for water and sewer projects. This factor puts considerable burden and incredible strain on water and sewer infrastructure development projects on our reservation. Basically, HUD is prohibited from earmarking portions of housing funds to pay for infrastructure directly to Indian Health Services thus causing strain on tribal governments.

I urge Congress to remove language from Senate Bill 556, the Indian Healthcare Improvement Reauthorization Act of 2003 that prevents tribes from leveraging HUD funds with Indian Health Services Sanitation Facilities Construction Funds.

II. Federal Appropriations.

The Hopi Tribe understands and appreciates its annual appropriation of $3.2 million for NAHASDA funding. The Hopi Tribe understands and respects the conflicting priorities that the war on terrorism has placed on Congress and the President. However, the needs of Indian Country must also be a priority.

As the House and Senate continues negotiations on the Fiscal Year 2005 budget resolution, I urge Congress to help protect Indian housing funding from cuts in what may be the worst ever budget year for our tribes.

II. Census Data.

HUD's use of 2000 multi-race Census data instead of the 1990 single-race Census data for the NAHBG formula has affected the funding amount for the Hopi housing programs. Whether the conflict is over what is the best policy and which data best represents tribal populations, the simple fact is that our tribal population was not accurately counted and represented in the 2000 census. The end result will be the loss of considerable housing

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funds to the Hopi Tribe at the expense of more funding to those tribes that benefit from the multi-race formula.

III. Tribal Consultation.

The current HUD tribal consultation practices do not allow or provide for Indian tribes' input into the annual federal budget development process.

In November 6, 2000, President Clinton issued a Presidential Executive Order that ordered Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments and required all federal agencies to "establish regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration" with tribes. HUD's Tribal Government to Government Consultation Policy requires HUD to seek tribal input and this tribal input shall be a necessary and integral part of HUD's decision-making process. The decisions made on each fiscal year funding allocation with tribal input would strengthen the policy as intended by the Executive Order.

I urge HUD to work more closely with Tribes who know best what challenges they face in providing adequate housing for their members.

IV. Conclusion.

In conclusion, the Hopi Tribe appreciates your past support in addressing important issues that currently hinder economic and housing development opportunities within the Hopi Reservation. I look forward to continuing this strong relationship with our Congressional Delegation from Arizona and with all Members of Congress and in the Administration who are willing to help us address these important issues. Thank you.

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