



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

The Voice For Real Estate®

500 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001-2020
202.383.1194 Fax 202.383.7580
www.realtors.org/governmentaffairs

Pat Vredevoogd Combs
ABR, CRS, GRI, PMN
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CAE, CPA, CMA, RCE
EVP/CEO

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October 17, 2007

The Honorable Brian M. Higgins
431 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Higgins:

On behalf of the members of the National Association of REALTORS®, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in introducing H.R. 3498, the Neighborhood Reclamation and Revitalization Program Act of 2007. This bill will provide much needed relief for many cities like Buffalo that are facing blight and poverty.

H.R. 3498 will create a demolition program specifically targeted at those communities who need it most. The bill would provide grants to municipalities who have developed a comprehensive plan to demolish vacant housing, have experienced substantial population loss, and who suffer from urban decay and degradation of neighborhoods. Demolishing abandoned properties will rejuvenate neighborhoods and help invigorate local economies.

The National Association of REALTORS® supports Smart Growth principles which include improving existing communities and revitalizing older neighborhoods as an antidote to urban sprawl. Vacant properties can be a particularly blighting influence, an invitation to vandalism and other crimes, a depressing influence on property values, and a deterrent to redevelopment. H.R. 3498 has the potential to assist American cities to eliminate blight, attract better development, and improve their fiscal condition by putting vacant and abandoned property back on the tax rolls.

Thank you for introducing this important bill. We believe that the "Neighborhood Reclamation and Revitalization Program Act" is specifically targeted to provide opportunities for cities that sorely need it.

Sincerely,

Pat V. Combs, ABR, CRS, GRI, PMN
2007 President, National Association of REALTORS®

cc: Buffalo Niagara Association of REALTORS® Inc.