



Representative
Leslie Waters

through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Individuals and Households Program (IHP).

OTHER INITIATIVES:

- State Representative Leslie Waters was appointed by Speaker-Designate Allan Bense to chair a Hurricane Preparedness Workgroup;



Representative
Randy Johnson

- State Representatives Randy Johnson and Ed Jennings hosted a hurricane relief housing roundtable in Orlando following Hurricane Charley;

- The Internal Revenue Service temporarily suspended income restrictions on properties financed using Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (Housing Credits);

- The Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) compiled a statewide list of vacant units that could be available for rent to individuals displaced by the storms;

- FHFC published emergency rules for SHIP to provide for

greater flexibility and accelerated disbursement of funds to local governments;

- FHFC requested temporary relief from requirements related to Single-Family Mortgage Revenue Bonds to provide for greater flexibility;

- FHFC has proposed targeting of 2005 Housing Credits to applications for sites located in Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, St. Lucie, Martin, Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties;



Representative
Ed Jennings

- HUD directed all Single-Family FHA-approved lenders to provide relief to families with FHA insured mortgages affected by Hurricane Charley;

- HUD made available its Section 203(h) single-family home mortgage insurance program and its 203(k) loan program for damaged or destroyed properties; and

- HUD is providing flexibility and Section 108 loan guarantees for its CDBG program.

- The Affordable Housing Study Commission was asked to make recommendations on long-term recovery strategies related to affordable housing;



Affordable Housing Study Commission Recovery Recommendations

The Affordable Housing Study Commission was created by the legislature to make recommendations to improve public policy, stimulate community development and promote the production, preservation and maintenance of safe, decent and affordable housing for all Floridians. Each year the commission, which is comprised of 21 citizens appointed by the governor to represent various interests, prepares a report addressed to the governor and the legislature.

At the Oct. 1, 2004 meeting of the commission, Lieutenant Governor Toni Jennings requested that the commission provide recommendations related to hurricane recovery efforts for affordable housing in Florida. While Commission Chair Helen Hough Feinberg reports that the commission welcomes the opportunity to incorporate a full set of recommendations into its 2005 annual report, the commission has thus far released two sets of interim recommendations.




Lieutenant Governor Jennings with Commission Chair Helen Hough Feinberg and Orlando Cabrera, Executive Director of Florida Housing Finance Corp.

The first set of interim recommendations, issued October 5, 2004, represents ways in which the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) may assist affordable housing providers to efficiently repair, rehabilitate or develop affordable housing stock in hurricane disaster areas:


- 1. State/Local HUD Representative:** The commission recommends the creation of a temporary locally staffed position at HUD with the authority necessary to make decisions and seek waivers in order to coordinate storm recovery efforts in the state of Florida.
- 2. Relief From Selected Requirements Applicable to Programs Funded by HUD:** The commission recommends that the state seek waiver from or modification of the following HUD requirements to expedite the process and maximize the number of affordable units placed in service:

- DAVIS-BACON WAGE
- ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
- UNIFORM RELOCATION ASSISTANCE
- LEAD BASED PAINT

The second set of interim recommendations, issued Oct. 25, 2004 represents ways in which the Treasury and Congress can better promote the production of affordable housing units in hurricane disaster areas, at little or no cost to the federal government:

- 3. Designation as Difficult Development Areas (DDAs):** The Commission recommends that the state work with HUD and the appropriate committees in Congress to grant special consideration of the hurricane impacted areas in our state as DDAs under the Housing Credit program.
- 4. Waiver of 10 Year Rule:** The commission recommends that the state request legislation permitting a waiver of the “10 Year Rule” under the Housing Credit program for federally declared disaster areas within Florida.
- 5. Relief for First Time Home Buyers and Home Owners:** The Commission recommends that the State request legislative relief for a period of two years from: a) the first time home buyer requirement for individuals and families whose homes have been damaged by the storms, and b) the \$15,000 limit on Home Improvement Loans. For example, legislative relief from the first time home buyer requirement could be achieved by amending section 143(k)(11) to apply to bonds issued in 2005 and 2006. The Commission suggests that the dollar limit on Home Improvement Loans be increased to \$100,000. 

Private Sector Disaster Response

The response to the hurricanes has been enormous—it has involved individuals donating their personal their time and resources (something we heard a great deal about at the conference), as well as substantial responses from organizations such as Florida Legal Services and the local legal services offices around the state. And as usual, in times of distress, it has garnered the assistance of the collective human resources in churches and faith-based organizations. Arnold Andrews, Executive Director for Catholic Charities in St Petersburg, FL., was one of those who spent a large part of his time before the conference assisting in Florida’s hurricane devastated counties and abroad. We were honored to have Mr. Andrews give a presentation on the role of churches and faith-based organizations in affordable housing at the 2004 conference, highlighting the success of the San Jose Mission. See page 16 for story. 



Arnold Andrews, Executive Director, St. Petersburg Catholic Charities, presenting at Coalition conference.