

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 30, 1991

The Honorable Alice K. Wolf
Mayor - City of Cambridge
City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mayor Wolf:

Thank you for your recent correspondence concerning the Bush Administration's proposed alterations to the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG). I appreciate your taking the time to share your views on this important matter.

For nearly two decades, the CDBG program has brought effective local initiatives to bear on local issues. The program has enabled community planners to target low-income and special needs communities with well-designed projects. CDBG dollars are vital for helping cities and towns to rehabilitate low and moderate income housing, provide shelter and services for the homeless, and fund senior citizen centers, day care centers, summer youth programs, anti-crime programs, adult education, job training, and other important initiatives.

I share your concern, therefore, about the 9 percent cut in CDBG funding that the Bush Administration has proposed for Fiscal Year 1992. This proposal would bring the CDBG budget down to \$2.9 billion from its Fiscal Year 1991 appropriation of \$3.2 billion. I am hopeful that Congress will be able to restore these much needed funds, as we have done in previous years.

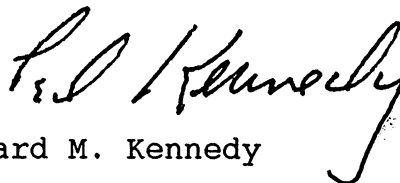
In addition, I am concerned about the President's proposal to consolidate \$15 billion in federal funds into block grants to the states. As you know, CDBG was one of the programs identified by the President for this consolidation. If accepted, this change would make CDBG and other urban programs, which now receive funds directly from the federal government, subject to state government control. At a time when Massachusetts and other states are facing increasing budget difficulties, such a shift in control could seriously jeopardize urban programs.

It is my understanding that the Administration, responding to widespread objections, is now willing to leave CDBG off the list of programs it seeks to consolidate. I am encouraged by these signals from the White House. I remain concerned, however, about the overall concept put forward by the President, which is

fundamentally flawed and is likely to result in a significant loss of federal funds for urban areas in the coming years.

You may be assured that I will continue to pursue these and other concerns we share. Again, thank you for taking the time to write to me. I look forward to working closely with you in the future to keep the CDBG program strong and independent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. M. Kennedy", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edward M. Kennedy

EMK/ar

1.
CONSENT COMMUNICATIONS S-660

Comm. from Edward M. Kennedy relative to
alterations to the Community Develop-
ment Block Grant Program.

In City Council,

May 13, 1991

Placed on file