

Press Release
Newark, New Jersey
May 13, 2009
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Community Groups Rally to Demand:
No More Demolitions, Expand Public Housing and Public Works NOW
From New Orleans to Newark
Jobs for Natives and Immigrants

Wednesday, May 13, 5 PM
One Newark Center, 1085 Raymond Blvd.
Newark, New Jersey

Newark, New Jersey (May 13, 2009). Supporters of defending and expanding public housing, from New Orleans to Newark, and across the country, will be gathering at 5 PM at the Department of Housing and Urban Development office in Newark for a rally and press conference to deliver their message. Those gathered will have as a special message for Diane Johnson, who holds two positions: director of HUD's Newark office, and head of the Housing of Authority of New Orleans one-person board. In the latter capacity Johnson, who took over last spring touting that 'I understand demolition', is continuing efforts to demolish more public housing in the still-hurricane ravaged city, where more than 100,000 residents, disproportionately poor and black, have not been able to return, and where the city faces its worse housing crisis since the civil war. Despite this dire situation Johnson, with the full support of new HUD secretary--and former NYC housing director-- Shaun Donovan, and President Obama, just finished evicting several hundred still traumatized Katrina survivors from the Lafitte public housing development. Johnson and the Obama administration now plan to go ahead with demolition of Lafitte, which New York Times architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff denounced as "a human and architectural tragedy of vast proportions."

While in New Orleans Johnson, and the Obama administration, carry out further demolitions, in Newark Mayor Booker, his own Housing Authority and HUD continue their relentless campaign against Public Housing residents. This attack includes pushing out residents from the Baxter Terrace Public Housing development, even though residents have not yet secured alternative housing. Furthermore, across the country homeowners and renters are being foreclosed and evicted, many having to find housing by doubling up with relatives or moving into tent cities that are rapidly expanding across the country.

Instead of demolitions and displacement, housing groups from New Orleans to Newark will be calling on Mayor Booker, Mayor Nagin of New Orleans, and President Obama, to impose an immediate national moratorium on all

demolitions and evictions in both public housing and in private sector housing. Furthermore, to address the housing and economic crisis, we call for the creation of a massive public works plan to rebuild our infrastructure and public services. This public works plan would create millions of prevailing wage, public sector jobs—not controlled by private contractors--, open to natives and immigrants, to rebuild our infrastructure and public services, including well-built, located, affordable, and democratically managed Public Housing. We call for financing of this through an end to the trillion-dollar bailouts of Wall Street, ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a massive wealth-tax on millionaires and billionaires.

Sponsor: C3/Hands Off Iberville, People's Organization for Progress, Harlem Tenants Council, May Day New Orleans, NESRI; New York Solidarity Coalition with Katrina and Rita Survivors; IAC. For more info call Jay Arena at 504-520-9521 or email jarenanynola@gmail.com