



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-1000

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL
AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The Honorable Judy Biggert
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6050

Dear Representative Biggert:

On behalf of Secretary Preston, thank you for your letter of August 7, 2008, concerning the Department's efforts to simplify and improve disclosures under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA). HUD is aware of the high level of interest in the proposed rule.

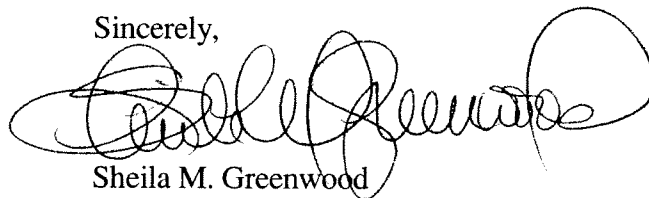
As you acknowledge in your letter, the Department extended its original 60 day public comment period to 90 days to assure meaningful public comment. During that process, the Department received extensive and thoughtful comments from individuals, members of Congress, consumer organizations, industry associations, and numerous companies involved in the loan origination and settlement process including lending institutions, mortgage brokers, real estate agents, attorneys, and title and settlement agents, as well as federal and state regulators. The Department continues to carefully consider these comments, and will make appropriate modifications and improvements to the rule.

The current housing finance situation has dramatically highlighted the need to move forward responsibly and expeditiously with measures to help American homebuyers. Many of the current difficulties, including the high rate of foreclosures, have been caused in part by consumers not fully understanding their loan terms and costs. The Department believes that a rule is needed to help consumers avoid such difficulties in the future.

The Department has been listening hard to all of the stakeholders in this process, and intends to strike a proper balance among their concerns. This includes concerns raised by members of Congress, the different industry groups, consumers, and governmental entities. As Secretary Preston stated during his confirmation hearing, "it is important for individuals to understand what they are getting into. I am hopeful that can be done in a way that is not overly burdensome to the industry."

Thank you again for your comments regarding the rule. The Department looks forward to continuing to work with members of Congress and all other interested parties regarding its RESPA reform efforts. I would ask that you forward a copy of this response to the other signatories on your letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheila M. Greenwood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Sheila M. Greenwood
Assistant Secretary for Congressional
and Intergovernmental Relations