



We build strength, stability, self-reliance *and* shelter.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity to meet with Wisconsin congressional members about the need for affordable housing

HUDSON, WI (Tuesday, February 7, 2023) – St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity (SCVHFH) will join hundreds of local Habitat organizations and affordable housing advocates in-person this week for Habitat for Humanity’s annual legislative conference, Habitat on the Hill.

During the three-day, Washington D.C. based event, advocates will convene and meet with Congressional leaders to draw attention to and discuss actionable solutions to housing affordability challenges faced by rural, suburban, and urban communities across the nation.

This year the conference is focused on themes highlighting advocacy for impact, with special emphasis on advancing Black homeownership and addressing the historic low supply of affordable homes.

SCVHFH will meet with policy advisors from the offices of Senator Tammy Baldwin, Senator Ron Johnson, and Representative Derrick Van Orden to discuss federal solutions that will help increase access to affordable homeownership in every state including in Pierce & St. Croix Counties in Wisconsin where the affiliate serves.

“Through our advocacy efforts, we are calling on Congress to support the bipartisan Neighborhood Homes Investment Act and robust funding for vital housing and community development federal programs,” said SCVHFH Executive Director Kristie Smith. “There is a significant shortage of 52,615 affordable homes in Wisconsin today. Pierce & St. Croix counties have the highest median home sales prices in the state. In rural Hammond, Wisconsin, the median home sales price in December 2022 increased by 58% in one year. Aging and dwindling housing stock and the need for updated zoning practices are also impacting supply. As young people try to enter the housing market, and homebuyers move further east, our particular geographic location makes affordable rural housing even less accessible. As part of the 15-county Twin Cities Metro Area, our median housing price is comparable to some of the wealthiest suburbs of Minneapolis and St. Paul (Minnesota).”

Since 2015, SCVHFH has partnered with USDA-RD and the Section 502 Single Family Direct Loan program to support mortgages for 10 homes across rural communities in Pierce & St. Croix Counties. With Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP) funds, the affiliate built a net-zero home community that showcased

sustainable, affordable housing in rural River Falls. The Eco-Village project was the first of its kind in the nation and included 18 LEED Platinum, carbon negative homes.

Habitat for Humanity is calling on Congress to support funding of the Section 502 Direct program at \$1.5 billion in the FY2024 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration appropriations bill, funding SHOP at \$20 million in the FY2024 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill, and funding HOME Investment Partnerships Program at \$2.5 billion in the FY2024 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill.

###

About St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity

St. Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity helps families with safe, affordable housing. In 1996, community members in River Falls, WI and surrounding communities recognized the critical need to bring people together to build housing, communities and hope and founded the local, nonprofit Habitat affiliate. In its tenure, SCV Habitat for Humanity has partnered with more than 71 families in Pierce and St. Croix Counties to help achieve the goal of home ownership. Visit scvhabitat.org for homeowner and volunteer information and to support the mission to help families on the path to generational wealth.

Contact: Kristie Smith, Executive Director, 715-350-8575 – ExecutiveDirector@scvhabitat.org