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Report: Pest Control Needed to Keep Low-Income Housing Safe

WASHINGTON (Feb. 12, 2003) - A report released by the National Association of African Americans in Housing (NOAAH) demonstrates the important role pesticides play in creating healthy, safe and decent surroundings. NOAAH is a non-profit organization dedicated to managing, building and improving low- and moderate-income housing.

This report, targeted to housing officials, policy makers, industry and the media, is part of the Healthy Homes Initiative, established by NOAAH in December 2001 to investigate environmental hazards in residential and other urban buildings. NOAAH Executive Director Kevin Marchman explains, "Too many of our children are put at risk every day in their own homes. These threats in housing can rob children of their health and cause permanent damage or even death in the most extreme cases."

A task force, established to gather information and prepare recommendations for the Healthy Homes Initiative report, consisted of housing producers, regulators and financial experts from NOAAH's membership of 140 organizations as well as public and private sector leaders.

RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment), the industry association of producers and suppliers of specialty pesticides and fertilizers, was a founding member of the Healthy Homes Initiative task force.

"We have long recognized the significant threats pests, such as cockroaches, rats and other vermin, pose to the public and particularly to children living in low - and moderate-income housing," says RISE President Allen James who serves on the task force.

"Pesticides are an important part of an overall pest management strategy to keep these children safe," he adds.

The Healthy Homes Initiative report released in early February, finds low-income housing attracts more than its fair share of pests such as cockroaches, rats and mice. As carriers of bacteria, fungi and viruses, these pests contaminate living areas and can cause allergies, asthma and hypersensitivity reactions. A study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows minorities to be disproportionately concentrated in poor housing. The study also notes that African-Americans and children continue to have higher rates of asthma-related incidents, emergency room visits, hospitalizations and deaths due to their exposure to pests.

The Healthy Homes Initiative task force, through this report, recommends education, eradication and sanitation to address concerns of pest infestations and threats. The task force also suggests the need for greater efforts to develop the industry's capacity for accurately assessing these problems and applying cost-effective solutions. Marchman stresses, "If we work to put the necessary guidelines in place for government officials and property managers, we can start to reverse this devastating trend."

In addition to addressing the importance of pesticides, the Healthy Homes Initiative report also covers the devastating health effects of mold and lead due to poor housing. To see the [full report](#), visit www.pestfacts.org or www.noaah.org.