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State Honors Maureen Kostyak of the Seattle Office of Housing

SPOKANE, Wash.—Sept. 11, 2007—Maureen Kostyak was honored last night by the State of Washington for years of service to the mission of providing affordable housing for the benefit of Washington residents. In an awards ceremony at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane that was part of the annual Housing Washington conference attended by more than 700 peers and colleagues, Ms. Kostyak received a 2007 *Friend of Housing* award from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission.

Ms. Kostyak has played a major role in shaping the housing agenda in Olympia since the early 1990's. One of her great successes was the creation of the Washington Families Fund by the Washington Legislature. She was the visionary who saw the need for a fund to support social services connected to affordable housing. She found a legislative sponsor and helped obtain the first \$2 million to go into the fund in 2004. This was soon augmented by private donations to reach a total of \$5 million to start the program.

An expert in housing policy, she has helped to ground advocacy discussions in a clear legal and political context. For over 20 years she has walked the delicate balance of being an effective housing advocate within government, for a long time working for King County and most recently for the Seattle Office of Housing. She has steadily educated policy makers and elected officials about housing needs. She has patiently explained the ramifications of policy, the good, and the bad. She has created advocacy opportunities so that others could make their case. She has also educated advocates on the techniques that are effective in government circles.

Finding a strong local source for housing funding has long been one of Ms. Kostyak's personal passions. She first advocated for local funding through the Real Estate Excise Tax, making affordable housing production an eligible use.

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Although this success was short lived, the concept took root and re-appeared in the form of the first \$10 document-recording fee included in HB2060 in 2002. The concept was carried on when the legislature passed the second recording fee in 2005 with HB2163, establishing a Homeless Housing Program. And, this past legislative session the concept of local funding was carried further with the passage of HB1359. Among others, local governments across the state owe a debt of gratitude to Ms. Kostyack's policy skills, perseverance and gentle powers of persuasion.

Ms. Kostyack is now in her second year as the State Legislative Chair of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance and has served on the board of the Alliance for many years.

The Commission received a record 49 nominations for the *Friend of Housing* awards from people working in the public, private and independent sectors of the affordable housing industry. Honorees are selected for their leadership and exceptional contribution to creating or supporting affordable housing, implementing housing-related programs, creating innovative financing mechanisms for housing, supporting homebuyer education or technical training efforts within the housing community and helping to solve housing problems.

Washington State Housing Finance Commission is a publicly accountable, self-supporting agency dedicated to increasing housing access and affordability and to expanding the availability of quality community services for Washington state residents.

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