October 1, 2015

Colette Pollard
Reports Management Officer, QDAM
Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street SW, Room 4176
Washington, D.C. 20410

RE: Docket No. FR-5831-N-39

The Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA)\(^1\) thanks the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for an additional opportunity to comment on the latest proposed changes to its loan-level certification form, HUD 92900-A, *HUD/VA Addendum to Uniform Residential Loan Application*. MBA continues to support and agree with HUD’s objective of the revisions:

- To clarify the scope of liability associated with errors that can occur in the origination of Federal Housing Administration (FHA)-insured mortgages, and
- To foster a strong culture of quality control in the program.

However, after reviewing the latest proposed changes to the loan-level certification form, MBA finds that many of our previous concerns remain unaddressed. Additionally, a new provision expands the scope of the certification, undermining the core objective of legal certainty, while increasing compliance costs and creating more confusion as to the scope of liability. We recognize and appreciate that FHA recently took an important step in trying to create additional certainty in the quality control (QC) process with the release of the defect taxonomy. However, since penalties were not included in the taxonomy, it becomes even more critical that FHA has an alternative solution.

As MBA stated in its July 14, 2015, letter, the industry believes that a core principle of the loan-level certification should be that lenders are only liable for significant underwriting errors – errors defined as ones that lenders cannot cure and would render a mortgage uninsurable. This principle is fundamental to the certification because it provides lenders with a reasonable level of certainty that they will not be exposed to false claims risk due to minor, unintentional errors, specifically those that would not

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\(^{1}\) The Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA) is the national association representing the real estate finance industry, an industry that employs more than 280,000 people in virtually every community in the country. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the association works to ensure the continued strength of the nation’s residential and commercial real estate markets; to expand homeownership and extend access to affordable housing to all Americans. MBA promotes fair and ethical lending practices and fosters professional excellence among real estate finance employees through a wide range of educational programs and a variety of publications. Its membership of over 2,200 companies includes all elements of real estate finance: mortgage companies, mortgage brokers, commercial banks, thrifts, REITs, Wall Street conduits, life insurance companies and others in the mortgage lending field. For additional information, visit MBA’s Web site: [www.mba.org](http://www.mba.org).
have an impact on a loan’s insurability or risk of loss to the FHA. If lenders continue to be exposed to such legal risk, they will have no choice but to reevaluate how (or if) they conduct business with FHA and whether they can afford to lend to borrowers with less than pristine credit histories. This outcome is not the one that HUD claims to support. It is the evitable outcome, however, given the lack of certainty that exists with the loan-level certification today and as it is proposed. Indeed, as a direct consequence of increased compliance costs and the uncertainty surrounding legal liability, MBA has already seen some of its members impose new credit overlays and/or limit involvement in FHA lending.

The new inclusion of paragraph (h) on page four referencing the Pre-Endorsement review may be an attempt to provide certainty to lenders without directly addressing the issue of materiality or significant defect; however, it does not effectively address the industry’s concerns and may possibly expand lender liability. Currently, the Pre-Endorsement review process is a post-closing process whereby lenders determine whether a borrower’s file contains all of the required documents, as noted in the HUD Handbook. The proposed language potentially converts this quality control process to another underwriting process that 1) changes the purpose of the function, as it exists today and 2) may expose lenders to false claims liability for any errors in the documents contained in the pre-endorsement review, a process that is not presently tied to a certification requirement in HUD regulations or guidelines. Moreover, including a reference to the Pre-Endorsement review process in a loan-level certification is unnecessary, as the purpose of the certification is to attest to whether the loan was underwritten to FHA guidelines, not to certify a post-closing function.

The combination of increased false claims liability and operational burdens on lenders created by (h) will lead to additional cost to consumers. If lenders must engage in such a robust certification, they would perform a QC review on every file, which would result in lenders passing this cost to the consumer. While such a cost increase would affect all FHA borrowers, it would have the most adverse impact to underserved communities with smaller loan sizes.

MBA strongly recommends that HUD completely remove paragraph (h) on page 4. This paragraph does not support the goal of creating additional certainty for lenders in connection with the loan underwriting process and it negatively affects consumers. MBA believes that reasonable amendments to the loan-level certifications on page three of the Addendum could ensure appropriate clarity and certainty.

MBA strongly encourages HUD to revise the lender certification on page three of the Addendum to language that would support the following principles:

- Loan-level underwriting certifications should recognize that underwriting entails subjective judgments.

- Liability should only arise in the event of a) knowing or reckless reliance on false statements, or b) significant underwriting errors, defined as errors that cannot be
cured, would render a mortgage uninsurable, or would affect potential loss severity.

- HUD should evaluate loans based on the evidence available to the lender at the time of origination. This policy is key to HUD ensuring that lenders are held to a fair and reasonable standard. A loan should not be subject to indemnification or false claims risk when the lender underwrites a loan based on supported and verified income documentation in the original loan file, but new information becomes available after the closing that may contradict that verified data.

MBA believes that the certification principles outlined above effectively target the government’s most powerful enforcement tools on the types of activities and bad actors that expose the taxpayer to fraud or misrepresentation. At the same time, they provide strong incentives for FHA lenders to maintain robust quality control systems without exposing them to harsh penalties that can and do occur despite maintenance of such systems. The attached revisions to the certification language reflect these goals.

MBA understands that a partnership among stakeholders is the best way to achieve the goal of providing affordable credit to borrowers with limited financial options. In an effort to increase access to credit by providing clarity and certainty to the industry, the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) recently underwent a successful process to clarify and define its representation and warranty framework. MBA is prepared to undertake a similar process with FHA. MBA believes that doing so would be a positive step toward serving borrowers who rely on FHA-insured loans to achieve their American Dream.

Should you have questions or wish to discuss any aspect of this letter, please contact me at 202-557-2878 or Tamara King at (202) 557-2758 or TKing@mba.org.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Pete Mills
Senior Vice President, Residential Policy and Membership Engagement
### Part 1 - Identifying Information
(mark the type of application)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application for Home Loan Guaranty</th>
<th>VA Application for Insurance under the National Housing Act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Borrower’s Name &amp; Present Address (Include zip code)</td>
<td>3. Lender/Mortgagee Case No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</table>

### FHA Sponsored Originations

VA: The veteran and the lender hereby apply to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Guaranty of the loan described here under Section 3710, Chapter 37, Title 38, United States Code, to the full extent permitted by the veteran’s entitlement and severally agree that the Regulations promulgated pursuant to Chapter 37, and in effect on the date of the loan, shall govern the rights, duties, and liabilities of the parties.

### HUD Instructions: The capitalized terms used in this form refer to those terms as used in the relevant sections of the current version of Single Family Housing Policy Handbook, HUD 4000.1.

#### Part II – Lender/Mortgagee Certification

21. The undersigned lender/mortgagee makes the following certifications to induce the Department of Veterans Affairs to issue a certificate of commitment to guarantee the subject loan or a Loan Guaranty Certificate under Title 38, U.S. Code, or to induce the Department of Housing and Urban Development - Federal Housing Commissioner to issue a firm commitment for mortgage insurance or a Mortgage Insurance Certificate under the National Housing Act.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HUD-92900-A (Rev. 9/28/15)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OMB Approval No. VA: 2900-0144 (exp. 11/30/2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUD: 2502-0059 (exp. 04/30/2017)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Items "F" through "H" are to be completed as applicable for VA loans only.

F. The names and functions of any duly authorized agents who developed on behalf of the lender/mortgagee any of the information or supporting credit data submitted are as follows:

| Name & Address | Function (e.g., obtained information on the Uniform Residential Loan Application, ordered credit report, verifications of employment, deposits, etc.) |

G. If no agent is shown above, the undersigned lender/mortgagee affirmatively certifies that all information and supporting credit data were obtained directly by the lender/mortgagee.

H. The undersigned lender/mortgagee understands and agrees that it is responsible for the omissions, errors, or acts of agents identified in item F as to the functions with which they are identified.

### WARNING:
This warning applies to all certifications made in this document.
The knowing submission of a false, fictitious, or fraudulent certification may be subject to criminal and civil penalties, including confinement for up to 5 years, fines, and civil penalties. 18 U.S.C. §§ 287, 1001 and 31 U.S.C. §3729.
Part III - Notices to Borrowers

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 5 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. This agency’s request is not an endorsement or support of any private entity.  This information is requested in order to carry out the responsibilities of the Federal Government.  The information will be used solely for purposes related to the responsibilities of the Federal Government.  The information will not be disclosed or released by this institution to another Government Agency or Department without your consent except as required or permitted by law. Caution. Delinquencies, defaults, foreclosures and abuses of mortgage loans involving programs of the Federal Government can be costly and detrimental to your credit, now and in the future.  The lender in this transaction, its agents and assigns as well as the Federal Government, its agencies, agents and assigns, are authorized to take any of the actions permitted by the Deed of Trust, the security instrument, and any and all of the following actions in the event loan payments become delinquent on the mortgage loan described in the attached application: (1) Report your name and account information to a credit bureau; (2) Assess additional interest and penalty charges for the period of time that payment is not made; (3) Assess charges to cover administrative costs incurred by the Government to service your account; (4) Offset your wages, salary, other income, or other assets (except as required and permitted by law).  The information will be used to determine your eligibility for a loan.  This information may be used for credit, employment and rental purposes.  Neither the information provided nor any of the requested information, including SSN, may result in disapproval of your loan application. This is notice to you as required by the Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978 that VA or HUD/FHA has a right of access to financial records held by financial institutions in connection with the consideration or administration of assistance to you. Financial records will be disclosed to lenders, servicers or agencies which are authorized to have access to your records for the purpose of making or servicing your loan.  Financial records will be disclosed to lenders, servicers or agencies which are authorized to have access to your records for the purpose of making or servicing your loan. Financial records will be disclosed to lenders, servicers or agencies which are authorized to have access to your records for the purpose of making or servicing your loan. Financial records will be disclosed to lenders, servicers or agencies which are authorized to have access to your records for the purpose of making or servicing your loan. Financial records will be disclosed to lenders, servicers or agencies which are authorized to have access to your records for the purpose of making or servicing your loan. Financial records will be disclosed to lenders, servicers or agencies which are authorized to have access to your records for the purpose of making or servicing your loan.

Part IV - Borrower Consent for Social Security Administration to Verify Social Security Number

I authorize the Social Security Administration to verify my Social Security number to the Mortgagee identified in this document and HUD/FHA, through a computer match conducted by HUD/FHA. I understand that this authorization allows no additional information from my Social Security records to be provided to the Mortgagee and that the verification of my Social Security number does not constitute confirmation of my identity. I also understand that my Social Security number may not be used for any other purpose than the one stated above, including resale or resale disclosure to other parties. The only other disclosure permitted by this authorization is for review purposes to ensure that HUD/FHA complies with SSA’s consent requirements. I am the individual to whom the Social Security number was issued or that person’s legal guardian. I declare and affirm under the penalty of perjury that the information contained herein is true and correct. I know that if I make any representation that I know is false to obtain information from Social Security records, I could be punished by a fine or imprisonment or both. This consent is valid for 180 days from the date signed, unless otherwise indicated by the individual(s) named in this loan application.

Read consent carefully. Review accuracy of social security number(s) and birth dates provided on this application.

Signature(s) of Borrower(s) Date Signed

Signature(s) of Co - Borrower(s) Date Signed

Part V - Borrower Certification

22. Complete the following for a HUD/FHA Mortgage.
   22a. Do you own or have you sold other real estate within the past 6 months on which there was a HUD/FHA mortgage?

   Yes No NA

22b. Address:
   if the dwelling to be covered by this mortgage is to be rented, it is a part of an adjoigning or contiguous to any government subdivision or group of concentrated rental properties including eight or more dwelling units in which you have any financial interest? Yes No If “Yes” give details.

22c. Do you own more than four dwellings? Yes No If “Yes” submit form HUD-92651.

22d. Complete for VA-Guaranteed Mortgage. Have you ever had a VA home Loan? Yes No

IMPORTANT: If you are certifying that you are married for the purpose of VA benefits, your marriage must be recognized by the place where you and/or your spouse resided at the time of marriage, or where you and/or your spouse resided when you filed your claim (or a later date when you become eligible for benefits) (38 U.S.C. § 103(c)). Additional guidance on when VA recognizes marriages is available at http://www.va.gov/opa/marriage/.

24. Applicable for Both VA & HUD. As a home loan borrower, you will be legally obligated to make the mortgage payments called for by your mortgage loan contract. The fact that you dispose of your property after the loan has been made will not relieve you of liability for making these payments. Payment of the loan in full is ordinarily the way liability on a mortgage note is ended. Some home buyers have the mistaken impression that if they sell their homes when they move to another locality, or dispose of it for any other reasons, they are no longer liable for the mortgage payments and that liability for these payments is solely that of the new owners. Even though the new owners may agree in writing to assume liability for your mortgage payments, this assumption agreement will not relieve you from liability to the holder of the note which you signed when you obtained the loan to buy the property. Unless you are able to sell the property to a buyer who is acceptable to VA or to HUD/FHA and who will assume the payment of your obligation to the lender, you will not be relieved from liability to repay any claim which VA or HUD/FHA may require to be paid your lender on account of default in your loan payments. The amount of any such claim will be a debt owed by you to the Federal Government. This debt will be the object of established collection procedures.

25. I, the Undersigned Borrower(s) Certify that:

   (1) I have read and understand the foregoing concerning my liability on the loan and Part III Notices to Borrowers.
   (2) I, the Borrower or Co-Borrower will occupy the property within 60 days of signing the security instrument, and intend to continue occupancy for at least one year; or
   (3) I do not intend to occupy the property as my primary residence.
   (4) I was aware of this valuation when I signed my contract and I have paid or will pay in cash from my own resources at or prior to loan closing a sum equal to the difference between the contract purchase price or cost and the VA or HUD/FHA established value. I do not and will not have outstanding after loan closing any unpaid contractual obligation on account of such cash payment.

   Signature(s) of Borrower(s) – Do not sign unless this application is fully completed. Read the certifications carefully and review accuracy of this application.

   Signature(s) of Borrower(s) Date Signed

Signature(s) of Co - Borrower(s) Date Signed
Direct Endorsement Approval for a HUD/FHA-Insured Mortgage

1. Borrower’s Name & Present Address (Include zip code)
2. Property Address
3. Agency Case No. (include any suffix)

Approved:
Date Mortgage Approved
Date Approval Expires

Modified & approved as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan Amount (include UFMIP)</th>
<th>Interest Rate</th>
<th>Proposed Maturity</th>
<th>Monthly Payment</th>
<th>Amount of Up Front Premium</th>
<th>Amount of Monthly Premium</th>
<th>Term of Monthly Premium</th>
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Owner Occupancy NOT required

To the best of mortgagee’s actual knowledge, all material conditions of Approval have been satisfied and the following are true:

This mortgage was rated as an “accept” or “approve” by FHA’s TOTAL Mortgage Scorecard. As such, the undersigned representative of the mortgagee certifies that the mortgagee reviewed the TOTAL Mortgage Scorecard findings and, prior to signing this certification, there were no subsequent material changes in the application information that would change that rating or, if changed, would cause the mortgage not to be eligible had it been manually underwritten that this mortgage meets the Final Underwriting Decision (TOTAL) requirements for approval. The undersigned representative of the mortgagee also certifies that all information entered into TOTAL Mortgage Scorecard accurately represents or is accurately is true, complete, and accurate based upon information obtained by the mortgagee and validated pursuant to FHA requirements.

Mortgagee Representative:
Signature: __________________________ Date: __________ Printed Name/Title: __________________________

And if applicable:

This mortgage was rated as a “refer” by a FHA’s TOTAL Mortgage Scorecard, or was manually underwritten by a Direct Endorsement underwriter. As such, the undersigned Direct Endorsement Underwriter certifies that I have personally reviewed and underwritten the appraisal according to standard and material FHA requirements.

Direct Endorsement Underwriter Signature __________________________ Date: __________ DE’s CHUMS ID Number __________________________

OR

This mortgage was rated as a “refer” by a FHA’s TOTAL Mortgage Scorecard, or was manually underwritten by a Direct Endorsement underwriter. As such, the undersigned Direct Endorsement Underwriter certifies that I have personally reviewed and underwritten the appraisal report (if applicable), credit application, and all associated documents used in underwriting this mortgage. I further certify that:

I have approved this loan and my Final Underwriting Decision was made having exercised due diligence and my underwriting judgment the required level of Care and Due Diligence;

I have performed all Specific Underwriter Responsibilities for Underwriters such that, in my underwriting judgment and in all material respects, and my underwriting of the borrower’s Credit and Debt, Income, Qualifying Ratios and Compensating Factors, if any, and the borrower’s DTI with Compensating Factors, if any, are within the parameters established by FHA and the borrower has assets to satisfy any required down payment and closing costs of this mortgage; and

I have verified believe that the Mortgage Insurance Premium and Mortgage Amount are true and correct and this loan is in an amount that is permitted by FHA for this loan type, property type, and geographic area.

Direct Endorsement Underwriter Signature __________________________ Date: __________ CHUMS ID Number __________________________

The Mortgagee, its owners, officers, employees or directors (do) (do not) have a financial interest in or a relationship, by affiliation or ownership, with the builder or seller involved in this transaction.
Borrower's Certification:

(a.) I will not have outstanding any other unpaid obligations contracted in connection with the mortgage transaction or the purchase of the said secured by property or collateral owned by me independently of the said mortgaged property, or obligations approved by the Commissioner;

(b.) One of the undersigned intends to occupy the subject property (note: this item does not apply if owner-occupancy is not required by the commitment);

(c.) All charges and fees collected from me as shown in the settlement statement have been paid by my own funds, gift funds, or acceptable funds, and no other charges have been or will be paid by me in respect to this transaction.

Mortgagee's Certification:

The Mortgagee by and through the undersigned certifies only that, to the best of its actual knowledge:

(a) The loan terms, loan type, property address, Borrower information including names, social security number, credit scores, marital status, employment status, and Borrower occupancy status, in its application for insurance and in this Certificate accurately represents or is accurately based upon information obtained by the mortgagee, are true and correct;

(b) All loan approval conditions appearing in any outstanding commitment issued under the above case number have been fulfilled and this loan closed in a manner consistent with the mortgagee’s approval;

(c) Complete disbursement of the loan has been made to the Borrower, or to his/her creditors for his/her account and with his/her consent and any escrow has been established in accordance with applicable law;

(d) The note and security instrument are in a form acceptable to HUD and the security instrument has been recorded and is a good and valid first lien on the property described;

(e) No charge has been made to, or paid by the Borrower, except as permitted under HUD regulations;

(f) The copies of the credit and security instruments which are submitted herewith are true and exact copies as executed and filed for record;

(g) It has not paid any kickbacks, fee or consideration of any type, directly or indirectly, to any party in connection with this transaction except as permitted under HUD regulations and administrative instructions.

(h) A Pre-Endorsement Review has been completed and revealed no deficiencies or defects in the documents listed at HUD Handbook 4000.1, II.A.7.b. that would render the loan ineligible for FHA insurance endorsement.

I, the undersigned authorized representative of the mortgagee, certify that I have personally reviewed the mortgage documents, closing statements, application for insurance endorsement, and all accompanying documents and request the endorsement of this mortgage for FHA insurance.

Note: If the approval is executed by an agent in the name of the mortgagee, the agent must enter the mortgagee’s code number and type.