

June 1, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Capitol, Room S-206
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Subcommittee Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
133 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Subcommittee Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
123 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Subcommittee Chair Murray, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Collins:

As Congress considers the fiscal year 2012 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies appropriations, we, the undersigned group of concerned organizations, urge you to support the programs that help communities across America rebuild their local economies and improve their fiscal stability.

We urge you to support the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and related grant programs in the fiscal year 2012 T-HUD Appropriations Bill. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities helps community leaders get the most out of each federal or state dollar invested in their neighborhoods. These programs make federal investments go even further by helping local leaders leverage private sector investment, save money in municipal budgets, and help families with housing and transportation costs – all while creating jobs.

Specifically, we support continued funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Initiative, which provides Regional Planning Grants and Community Challenge Grants. These grants help communities streamline regulatory barriers and make strategic investments with limited taxpayer dollars. Additionally, we support continued funding for the Department of Transportation's Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program, which strengthens the economy, creates jobs, reduces gridlock, and provides safe, low-cost transportation choices for our citizens.

We acknowledge that this year's budget decisions are difficult and that Congress needs to cut wasteful spending, but the Partnership for Sustainable Communities helps the federal government work more efficiently and effectively. The Partnership is a vital opportunity to effectively coordinate and leverage federal programs for the greatest long-term benefit to our communities. Cutting these programs would be a shortsighted solution to the budget shortfall, and one that would stunt the economic growth of regions that could benefit from these programs.

We urge you to support the Partnership for Sustainable Communities in the FY2012 T-HUD Appropriations bill.

For more information about Smart Growth America and the undersigned group of concerned organizations, please contact Katy Hartnett at (202) 207-3355 ext. 125 or khartnett@smartgrowthamerica.org.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Bicycling and Walking
Amalgamated Transit Union

America Bikes
America Walks
American Farmland Trust
American Institute of Architects
American Planning Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
Apollo Alliance
Audubon International
Brownfields Coalition
Center for Community Progress
Center for Neighborhood Technology
Center for Rural Strategies
CEOs for Cities
Coalition of Urban Serving Universities
Enterprise Community Partners
Environmental Defense Fund
Global Green USA
Institute for Transportation and Development Policy
International Downtown Association
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
LOCUS: Responsible Real Estate Developers and Investors
Low Income Investment Fund
Mercy Housing
Metropolitan Planning Council
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Association of Development Organizations
National Association of Local Government Environment Professionals
National Complete Streets Coalition
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Housing Conference
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Housing Trust
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Partnership for Working Families
Policy Link
Prevention Institute
Project for Public Spaces
Reconnecting America
Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership
Sierra Club
Smart Growth America
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments
Transportation Equity Network
Transportation For America
TransForm
Upstream Public Health
U.S. Green Building Council
U.S. PIRG