

March 21, 2011

The Honorable Al Franken  
320 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
302 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

Congress' decisions about the federal budget have immense implications for communities across our state and affect our ability to rebuild local economies and improve fiscal stability. As you consider this year's difficult budget decisions, we, the undersigned group of concerned organizations in Minnesota, urge you to support the federal programs that keep our communities strong, healthy and economically vibrant.

**Specifically, we urge you to support the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and related grant programs in the FY11 Continuing Resolution and the FY12 Appropriations process.**

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities helps community leaders in Minnesota get the most out of each federal or state dollar invested in our neighborhoods. These programs help local leaders leverage private sector investment and save money in municipal budgets, thereby helping families spend less on things like transportation—all while creating jobs. We strongly support these programs, including:

- Continued funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Initiative, which provides Regional Planning Grants and Community Challenge Grants. This program has already provided nearly \$6 million statewide to support strategic growth including grants for St. Paul's Metropolitan Council and the Region Five Development Commission in Staples.
- Continued funding for the Department of Transportation's TIGER program in FY11, which strengthens the economy, creates jobs, reduces gridlock, and provides safe, low-cost transportation choices to our citizens. This program has provided over \$42 million statewide for programs including St. Paul's Complete Streets Plan, the St. Paul Union Depot Multi-Modal Transit and Transportation Hub, and the Staples North/South Corridor.
- Full commitment of obligated funds to grants received by more than 87 regions around the country, including 5 in Minnesota, under the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Initiative and the Department of Transportation's TIGER program in FY09 and FY10.

We acknowledge that this year's budget decisions are difficult ones and that Congress needs to cut wasteful spending, but the Partnership for Sustainable Communities helps the federal government work smarter. 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 short-sighted solution to the budget shortfall, and one which would stunt the economic growth of our communities across Minnesota currently benefitting from the program.

We urge you to support the Partnership for Sustainable Communities in the FY11 Continuing Resolution and the FY12 Appropriations process.

For more information about these programs, please contact Jessica Holmberg at Smart Growth America at (202) 207-3355 ext. 121 or [jholmberg@smartgrowthamerica.org](mailto:jholmberg@smartgrowthamerica.org).

Sincerely,

Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

ISAIAH MN

Metropolitan Council

Region Five Development Commission

Transit for Livable Communities

Twin Cities LISC