

February 24, 2010

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

We are writing to endorse the Livable Communities Act, sponsored by Congressman Ed Perlmutter (CO), and to encourage you to support this important legislation. This bill helps support sustainable, community-driven planning and projects, which are more critical than ever to help our country meet growing economic, energy, and environmental challenges.

A growing number of communities across the country are looking for ways to support integrated planning efforts in order to cut traffic congestion, improve air quality, protect rural areas and green space, revitalize Main Streets and urban centers, and create more affordable living choices. For many working households, the goal of affordable living is becoming less attainable due to the combined burden of rising housing and transportation costs. The Livable Communities Act will help support efforts in urban, suburban and rural regions to create more affordable, attractive, economically viable communities.

In addition to funding needs, many communities face regulatory challenges when trying to use existing federal programs to support affordable, sustainable communities. The Livable Communities Act encourages collaboration between communities and federal agencies, recognizing the importance of regional and cross-jurisdictional cooperation in meeting these kinds of goals. Moreover, the bill would implement the interagency partnership between the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to more efficiently assist communities through coordinated federal transportation, environmental and housing programs.

The Livable Communities Act proposes the following programs, administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to encourage more sustainable communities and regions:

- A **Comprehensive Planning Grant** program will provide funding for partnering communities to undertake comprehensive regional planning that integrates transportation, housing, economic development, and environmental issues.
- A **Challenge Grant Program** will fund the implementation of projects, programs, or policies identified in these integrated regional plans through grants awarded to local communities over three years.
- An **Interagency Council on Sustainable Communities** will bring together the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of

- Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other federal agencies, to coordinate federal sustainable development policies and research.
- The **Office of Sustainable Housing And Communities** within the Department of Housing and Urban Development will coordinate federal policies that foster sustainable development, lead sustainability initiatives, and provide technical assistance to communities seeking to plan for a more sustainable future.

Over the last several years, regions from Sacramento, California to Salt Lake City, Utah that have led sustainable planning efforts have seen the benefits of this approach. Their plans have helped spur cooperation towards a better future for these communities. We believe that more communities, large and small, should have the opportunity to create and work towards a more sustainable future and the Livable Communities Act provides that opportunity. We strongly encourage you to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

America 2050
American Institute of Architects
American Planning Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
Apollo Alliance
Center for Neighborhood Technology
CEOS for Cities
Congress for the New Urbanism
Conservation Law Foundation
Enterprise Community Partners
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
League of American Bicyclists
Local Government Commission
National Complete Streets Coalition
National Housing Conference
National Housing Trust
National Resources Defense Council
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Northeast-Midwest Institute
PolicyLink
Project for Public Spaces
Reconnecting America
Smart Growth America
Transportation for America

State and Local Organizations

1,000 Friends of Connecticut (CT)
1,000 Friends of Minnesota (MN)
1,000 Friends of Oregon (OR)
10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania (PA)
Action Committee for Transit (MD)
Active Transportation Alliance (IL)
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability (MN)
American Planning Association – New Jersey Chapter (NJ)
Anchorage Citizens Coalition (AK)
Bicycle Commuters of Anchorage (AK)
Bike Delaware (DE)
Bloomington Transportation Options for People (IN)
Bozeman Sustainability Group (MT)
California WALKS (CA)
Cascade Land Conservancy (WA)
City of Duluth Mayor Don Ness (MN)
Cleveland Restoration Society (OH)
Colorado Environmental Coalition (CO)
Conservation Alabama Foundation (AL)
Conservation Minnesota (MN)
Empire State Future (NY)
Fit City Duluth (MN)
Fresh Energy (MN)
Futurewise (WA)
Greater Albuquerque Housing Partnership (NM)
Greater Ohio Policy Center (OH)
Greenbelt Alliance (CA)
Grow Smart Rhode Island (RI)
Growth and Justice (MN)
Hennepin County, MN Commissioner Peter McLaughlin (MN)
Housing Preservation Project (MN)
Houston Tomorrow (TX)
ISALIAH (MN)
Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department (MT)
LOCUS Minnesota (MN)
MA Smart Growth Alliance (MA)
Madison Area Bus Advocates (WI)
Metropolitan Planning Council (IL)
Minnesota State Senator Scott Dibble (MN)
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MN)
Missoula City-County Parks and Recreation Department (MT)
Missoula Health Department (MT)
New Jersey Audubon Society (NJ)

New Jersey County Planners Association (NJ)
New Jersey Future (NJ)
Opportunity Link, Inc. (MT)
PlanGreen (OR)
Ramsey County Commissioner Jan Parker (MN)
Regional Plan Association (NY – NJ – CT)
Renew Lehigh Valley (PA)
San Luis Obispo County Bicycle Coalition (CA)
Sierra Club – North Star Chapter (MN)
Smart Growth Vermont (VT)
Somerset County Planning Board (NJ)
St. Paul Smart Trips (MN)
Transit for Livable Communities (MN)
Tri-State Transportation Campaign (NY/NJ/CT)
Tucson Bike Alliance (AZ)
Twin Cities LISC (MN)
Vision Long Island (NY)
WalkBoston (MA)