

June 6, 2011

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H- 307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Latham
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Olver
Subcommittee Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Dicks, Subcommittee Chair Latham, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Olver:

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 programs that help communities across America rebuild their local economies and improve their fiscal stability, make communities strong, healthy, and economically vibrant.

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, same money in municipal budgets, and by helping families on things like transportation – all while creating jobs.

Specifically, we would like to see continued funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Initiative, which provides Regional Planning Grants and Community Challenge Grants. Regional Planning and Challenge Grants help communities leverage private sector investment, improve strategic growth, streamline regulatory barriers and make strategic investments with limited taxpayer dollars. Additionally, we would like to see continued funding for DOTs TIGER program, which strengthens the economy, creates jobs, reduces gridlock, and provides safe, low-cost transportation choices to 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 short-sighted solution to the budget shortfall, and one which would stunt the economic growth of regions benefiting and that will continue to benefit from the programs.

We urge you to support the Partnership for Sustainable Communities in FY2012 T-HUD Appropriations Bill. For more information about Smart Growth American 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

cc: House Committee on Appropriations, House Speaker John Boehner, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi