

June XX, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
S-221, The Capitol
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

As the Senate moves to consider energy and climate legislation, we respectfully request that the bill you bring to the Senate floor include strong support for the essential role of local governments in reducing energy consumption and global warming pollution by allocating two percent of the carbon revenues to the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program. America's cities and counties must be a full partner if our nation hopes to meet its ambitious energy independence and climate protection goals.

Authorized in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA), the EECBG program is intended to provide an ongoing source of funding for cities and counties to implement local initiatives that conserve energy, promote renewable energy, cut carbon pollution, and create jobs. Both the Kerry-Boxer "Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act," approved by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in fall 2009, and the Lieberman-Warner "Climate Security Act of 2008," brought to the Senate floor in June 2008, recognized the need for ongoing support of local government climate action and allocated resources to the EECBG program. The EECBG program was authorized for \$2 billion in annual funding. We are requesting that two percent of the bill's annual allocation revenues be directed toward EECBG funding because media reports have suggested that one percent of the allocations are expected to produce between \$600 million and \$1 billion in annual revenues.

As you know, America's cities and counties have been at the forefront of the national movement to implement new clean energy solutions by serving as laboratories of innovation. While many city, county, and state governments throughout the U.S. have stepped forward to tackle these issues, ongoing EECBG Program resources are needed to accelerate these efforts and launch new initiatives.

This partnership program is exactly what local officials throughout the United States continue to urge Congress to embrace – an opportunity to expand on the success of local initiatives to increase energy efficiency, promote energy conservation, expand renewable energy supplies, and create jobs. EISA ensures that EECBG program resources are results-oriented, with recipients reporting each year on their energy efficiency gains. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) recognized the tremendous potential of this program, providing \$3.2 billion to advance the program.

EECBG funding through the Recovery Act has spurred communities across the country to undertake innovative projects to conserve energy. Local governments are providing low-cost

financing for energy efficiency retrofits of buildings; setting and enforcing building efficiency standards; developing community-scale renewable energy; utilizing low-emission vehicles and fuels; installing alternative fuels infrastructure; promoting smart growth and increased mass transit to reduce vehicle miles travelled; and developing clean energy jobs.

For example, Salt Lake City, Utah has converted street and traffic lights to LED fixtures and implemented a Revolving Loan Fund to support businesses making energy efficiency upgrades. Twenty-nine city buildings are being retrofitted with energy efficient technologies while bike parking facilities are being constructed in five downtown garages as part of Columbus, Ohio's efforts to save energy. The city estimates that EECBG funds will save or create 80 jobs while saving the city more than \$800,000 in energy costs per year. For its part, the city of Carmel, Indiana is deploying windmills to power its sewer treatment plant. And Gastonia, North Carolina - in an effort to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Ozone - is pursuing electric vehicles to replace gasoline powered vehicles in its fleet, as well as acquiring route planning software for solid waste and public works vehicles to reduce vehicle miles traveled. These transportation investments are projected to save 31,650 gallons of fuel over five years.

It is time to build upon the crucial foundation that ARRA put down and move this country even closer to energy independence and further advance pressing climate protection objectives. The EECBG program gets us there through grants to local officials who know best how to meet the specific energy needs of their communities.

An ongoing commitment to this program is essential, especially at this time when local and state governments are facing severe budgetary shortfalls that now threaten their efforts to make further progress on national and local energy and climate goals. To sustain the forward progress made possible by ARRA and to enable even broader, ongoing local action that secures energy savings and other gains for the nation, we urge you to allocate to the EECBG program two percent of the carbon revenues realized through any comprehensive energy and climate bill you bring to the Senate floor.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator

BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator

CC: Senator John Kerry
Senator Joseph Lieberman