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Local Governments Call on President-elect Obama and Congress to Invest Economic Recovery Dollars in Local Climate Action

Initiatives Provide Opportunity for Green Jobs, Energy Independence and Emissions Reductions

Washington, DC—City and county elected leaders from across America today kicked off “Local Climate Action Week” to highlight innovative climate initiatives and draw attention to hundreds of clean energy projects that are ready-to-go and could quickly create green jobs in their communities. Hundreds of local officials called on President-elect Obama and Congress to invest stimulus dollars and long-term resources to fund local government projects that create green jobs, reduce energy consumption and cut greenhouse gas emissions. Dozens of communities nationwide are holding local events to highlight the potential for green jobs and climate solutions at the local level.

Resources including ready-to-go project descriptions are available at:
www.climatecommunities.us/mediaevent.html or www.icleiusa.org/blueprint.

“President-elect Obama made a clean energy economy a cornerstone of his election campaign and seems likely to tie economic stimulus dollars to green projects – we couldn’t be more pleased to have his leadership on this vitally important issue,” said Roger Dickinson, Sacramento County Supervisor and Climate Communities Executive Committee member. “Local governments are uniquely positioned to create immediate green energy jobs, and with federal assistance we are ready to put the President-elect’s plans into action.”

Local governments have thousands of ready-to-go projects – including building energy retrofits, construction of new green buildings, community-scale renewable energy projects, improvements in mass transit infrastructure and equipment, and projects to reduce vehicle use – that could immediately create new jobs, save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Examples of local green energy projects that could be implemented in the next 12 months if federal funds are made available include:

- **Nassau County, NY.** A bus rapid transit system for the geographic, economic and cultural center of Nassau County would create an estimated 100 jobs and cost \$23.4 million and is anticipated to significantly reduce vehicle miles traveled, fuel usage and carbon emissions.

- **El Paso, TX.** Energy retrofits at 53 facilities and at more than 600 intersections would save more than 10,000 kilowatts per year and \$1.743 million annually in energy costs while reducing annual emissions by 11,300 tons. Retrofits, including heating and cooling system replacements and energy efficient lighting systems, will cost an estimated \$15 million.
- **Westchester County NY.** Solar photovoltaic systems installed in four county office facilities would cost \$3.5 million. The County would use the renewable energy generated to run each complex, saving 989,000 kWh per year and \$150,000 annually in energy costs. The project would cut greenhouse gas emissions by 415 tons per year and create 20 new construction jobs.
- **Gainesville, FL.** A new Low income Energy Efficiency Program (LEEP) would assist 336 low income customers in upgrading their homes with energy efficiency measures to reduce energy use, improve comfort and save money. The proposed project will cost \$1 million annually, will save 537,936 kWh per year and will eliminate 457 metric tons of CO₂ annually. Job creation will include three full time employees and increase the demand for contractors, i.e., HVAC, insulators, electricians, plumbers, and general contractors.

According to the Energy Information Administration, more than 40 percent of energy consumption and carbon emissions come from residential and commercial buildings and one-third is generated by the transportation sector, making local government actions critical to reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Local governments set and enforce building codes, determine transportation and land use policies and provide critical education and incentives to businesses and homeowners to implement energy-saving measures.

“Local governments have laid the foundation for this country’s response to global warming, providing the leadership, solutions and innovation that city by city by town have helped curb greenhouse gas emissions and reduce energy use and costs,” said Michelle Wyman, Executive Director of ICLEI USA. “Climate Communities and ICLEI USA are organizing city and county leaders from across America to make sure that federal decision makers understand the essential role of local governments in creating green jobs, reducing energy use and addressing climate change.”

More than 340 local elected officials nationwide joined with Climate Communities and ICLEI USA this week to endorse **Empowering Local Government Climate Action: Blueprint for President Obama and 111th Congress**. Download the Blueprint at www.climatecommunities.us/endorseblueprint.html or www.icleiusa.org/blueprint.

Despite the vital role local governments will play in solving America’s energy and climate crisis, there are currently no federal programs to support local climate and energy initiatives. The Blueprint calls for stimulus legislation to include \$10 billion for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program and \$18 billion for public transit and green vehicles infrastructure. The Blueprint outlines many other opportunities for the federal government to invest in local government innovation, including:

- Enactment of a national greenhouse gas cap-and-trade program with a portion of the estimated \$150 billion carbon trading revenues invested in local government climate action and green jobs initiatives;

- Investment in public transit, green vehicles and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction through reauthorization of \$400 billion federal transportation legislation; and
- \$250 million for EPA Local Climate Demonstration Grants that empower local governments to continue creating new solutions to the climate challenge.

About Climate Communities: Climate Communities is a national coalition of cities and counties that is educating federal policymakers about the essential role of local governments in addressing climate change and promoting a strong local-federal partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For more information, see www.climatecommunities.us.

About ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability: ICLEI USA provides expertise, technical support, and innovative tools to help local governments advance their emissions reductions and sustainability goals. More than 500 cities, towns and counties in the U.S. are members of ICLEI. For more information, see www.icleiusa.org.