



May 24, 2010

The Honorable John Kerry  
United States Senate

The Honorable Joe Lieberman  
United States Senate

**Re: The Need to Invest in Local Government Climate Action**

Dear Senators Kerry and Lieberman:

We write on behalf of our growing network of hundreds of local government officials across America to urge you to make sure that the clean energy and climate legislation you are preparing includes strong support for the essential role of local governments in reducing energy consumption, promoting renewable energy, and curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

While we commend you for your leadership in preparing the American Power Act, we were surprised to see your discussion draft removed the strong support for local governments included in 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.

Your discussion draft of the American Power Act aims to make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy and reduce carbon pollution by 17 percent in 2020 and by 83 percent in 2050. America's cities and counties must be a full partner and totally involved in this national effort, if our nation is to meet these important and ambitious goals.

As you know, America's cities and counties have taken the lead in implementing clean energy solutions by serving as laboratories of innovation. 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. Further, local governments are the first responders who must deal with impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, drought, wildfires, flooding, and storms.

To achieve our national objectives, federal clean energy and climate legislation must empower local governments to achieve significant energy savings and emissions reductions, and create new clean energy jobs by:

- Providing an ongoing source of funding for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants;
- Financing additional investment in mass transit, passenger rail systems, and other strategies that reduce vehicle miles traveled;
- Providing Economic Development Administration funding to help communities retool closed manufacturing plants and other underutilized economic sites with new clean energy jobs; and
- Supporting local government adaptation initiatives to plan for the impacts of climate change, such as rising sea levels, drought, wildfires, flooding, and storms.

Again, we urge you to modify your discussion draft of the American Power Act so that it will unleash major, ongoing local government action to reduce energy consumption and address climate change.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to pass comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation this year, which will help America: (1) achieve energy independence and improve national security; (2) create new jobs, technology innovation, and business opportunities so that we can compete effectively in the growing international clean energy marketplace; and (3) cut carbon pollution so that we can better avoid and prepare for the costly potential impacts of global climate change, including rising sea levels and increased drought, wildfires, flooding, and storms.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,