



May 5, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman, House Committee on Energy & Commerce

The Honorable Edward Markey
Chairman, Energy and Environment Subcommittee

**Re: Request for Support for Local Government Climate Action
in the American Clean Energy and Security Act**

Dear Chairman Waxman and Chairman Markey:

We write on behalf of hundreds of local government officials across America to commend you for your leadership on the American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES), and to request your support to ensure that the legislation promotes the critical role of local governments in meeting the climate challenge.

Climate Communities is a coalition of cities, counties, towns, councils of government, metropolitan planning organizations, public power communities and other units of local government. Climate Communities is seeking a strong national response to the climate challenge that provides incentives and resources for local government climate action.

Local action is fundamental to climate protection strategies including building efficiency, community-scale renewable and distributed energy, clean land use and transportation, green infrastructure, green jobs development, and climate adaptation. While partnerships with states and the private sector are essential to successful local action, without direct support and resources to local governments, the potential for effective climate protection strategies will certainly fall short.

The local governments in Climate Communities are very pleased that the House Energy & Commerce Committee recognized the critical role of local climate action in the "Climate Change Legislation Design White Paper: Appropriate Rules for Different Levels of Government." Likewise, the six key principles for global warming legislation introduced by Chairwoman Barbara Boxer and the majority in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee this year seek to "ensure that states and local entities continue pioneering efforts to address global warming" and pledged to "use revenues from the carbon market to assist states, localities and tribes in addressing and adapting to global warming impacts."

While the ACES draft legislation does provide some support for local climate action, the fundamental structure of the draft does not recognize the potential and role of local government climate action. Climate Communities has convened a diverse group of local officials from across the nation to identify how the ACES legislation can better support greenhouse gas reductions through local government climate action. We provide the attached white paper that identifies a straightforward legislative approach, consistent with the structure of the current draft, which will empower localities to achieve climate reductions through building efficiency, community-scale renewable energy, transportation efficiency, green infrastructure, green jobs development, and adaptation measures. This approach to supporting local climate action would include:

- **Creating LEAD to Complement SEED** – Just as the ACES legislation seeks to support state governments in their climate protection efforts, Congress should support and invest in local government action on energy efficiency, community-scale renewable and other clean energy approaches with the creation of Local Energy and Environmental Action Development (LEAD) funds. Ten percent (10%) of the proceeds of the carbon market should support these LEAD funds, including 8 percent (8%) for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants.
- **Enhancing transportation efficiency by local governments** – by allowing Metropolitan Planning Organizations in areas with less than 50,000 populations to opt into the legislation’s transportation planning approaches, making planning transportation funding available to all MPOs by formula, and providing competitive grants to local governments for the implementation of projects and programs in these local plans. Ten percent (10%) of the proceeds of the carbon market should support such transportation efficiency planning and implementation.
- **Local Green Jobs and Green Businesses** – The ACES legislation should include local governments as eligible recipients of the green jobs and worker transition provisions of the bill. The legislation should also provide two percent (2%) of the proceeds of the carbon markets for Economic Development Administration grants for retooling closed manufacturing plants and other underutilized economic sites with new green technology jobs.
- **Supporting local government climate adaptation** – by allocating three percent (3%) of the proceeds of the carbon market to adaptation programs for local governments in ACES.
- **Making local government green infrastructure and clean energy projects eligible for offset credit** – by directing U.S. EPA to consider urban forestry, local green infrastructure, open space conservation, building efficiency, and other local projects, which are measurable and verifiable means of mitigating climate emissions, eligible for offset credits.

We respectfully request that you work with your colleagues to steer this legislation in a direction that will unleash major, sustainable local government action on climate change. Please contact Ken Brown or Matt Ward of the Climate Communities staff at 202-261-6011 if you have questions or want additional information concerning our recommendations.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you on this critical and historic legislation.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Roger Dickinson
Sacramento County, CA
Climate Communities Co-Chair



Councilmember Larry Phillips
King County, WA
Climate Communities Co-Chair

On behalf of Climate Communities Executive Committee

Supervisor James Burrell
New Kent County, VA

Councilmember Roger Berliner
Montgomery County, MD

Councilmember Dow Constantine
King County, WA

Alderman Larry Stuber
Savannah, GA

Supervisor Jane Halliburton
Story County, IA

County Executive Tom Suozzi
Nassau County, NY

Mayor Dan Malloy
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Supervisor Brett Hulsey
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Supervisor Andrea McGimsey
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Alderman John D'Amico
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Supervisor John McGlennon
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Supervisor Conan Smith
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Mayor Ellen Moyer
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