



URGE CONGRESS TO SUPPORT HUD'S SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

ACTION NEEDED: Urge your members of Congress, especially those serving on the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies, to fund HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative at the Senate proposed level of \$90 million as part of the final FY2012 Transportation-HUD Appropriations bill. In addition, respectfully request your Senators and Representatives to co-sponsor the Livable Communities Act (S. 1621) introduced by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and (H.R. 3325) introduced by Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-CO). If your Senators and Representatives have already co-sponsored the bill, please thank them for supporting this legislation (see attached list of co-sponsors).

BACKGROUND AND FUNDING HISTORY: The Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) was established in 2009 by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to encourage stronger interagency coordination around the issues of sustainable community, economic and transportation development.

In FY2010, Congress appropriated \$150 million for HUD's new Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities to support regional planning grants, community challenge awards, and national capacity building and research assistance. These new resources are designed to support locally driven strategies to integrate housing, local land use, infrastructure, economic development and transportation plans and projects. Of the \$100 million reserved for regional planning grants, Congress set aside \$17.5 million for small metropolitan and rural regions. Regional development organizations were a major recipient of the regional planning grants in the inaugural competition, with at least 31 of the 45 projects. For FY2011, HUD has \$100 million for the overall program, including \$70 million for regional planning grants with \$17.5 million carved out for small metropolitan and rural regions.

On September 21, the Senate Appropriations Committee cleared its FY2012 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill (THUD). Under the bill, HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative would receive \$90 million to provide grants for integrated housing and transportation planning efforts on both the regional and local levels, including \$63 million for Regional Integrated Planning grants and \$27 million for Community Challenge Planning grants. The Senate bill also includes a set-aside of \$15.75 million within the Regional Integrated Planning Grants for smaller regions (with a population of less than 200,000). The Senate committee report directs HUD to "continue to pay special attention to the unique needs of small and rural communities that would also benefit from coordinated transportation and housing planning."

The House draft of the FY2012 THUD bill eliminates all funding for HUD's SCI program. Meanwhile, the Administration requested \$150 million for FY2012.

In separate action, Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) introduced the "Livable Communities Act of 2011" (S. 1621) in the Senate on September 22 and Rep. Ed Perlmutter introduced companion legislation in the House (H.R. 3325) on November 4. The five-year, \$880 million proposals would formally authorize HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities and its Regional Planning and Community Challenge grant programs. The bills would also ensure that 15 percent of SCI funding supports rural regions and communities.

For more information, contact NADO Associate Legislative Director Jennifer Walsh at 202.624.8467 or jwalsh@nado.org

NADO LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

SAMPLE LETTER IN SUPPORT OF THE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ACT (S. 1621) and H.R. 3325

The Honorable **[First Name] [Last Name]**
[United States Senate or House]
Washington, DC **[20510 or 20515]**

Dear Senator or Representative **[Last Name]**:

On behalf of the **[insert organization name]**, I am writing to respectfully request you co-sponsor the *Livable Communities Act* (S. 1621) introduced by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) or or (H.R. 3325) introduced by Rep. Ed Perlmutter. This legislation is an important step in assisting regions and local communities with more in-depth action plans to integrate and coordinate community and economic development, transportation and growth management strategies.

While the legislation would authorize federal resources to assist with our regional and local initiatives, our sustainable development efforts are locally driven and accountable. This timely legislation would help improve federal interagency collaboration and coordination, especially with planning and project development requirements and investments. Besides helping address the routine conflicts among federal community, economic, housing and transportation development policies and programs, this bill recognizes the importance of building more resilient communities and places. In today's knowledge-based economy with intense competitive for talent and a highly mobile workforce, we are already finding that the regions and communities focused on quality of place and strategic public-private investments are gaining a competitive edge.

We are also pleased the legislation recognizes the unique needs and importance of small metropolitan and rural regions. As our small towns and rural regions face budget pressures and growth challenges, it is essential that we develop more comprehensive regional and local strategies to align infrastructure resources, retain our healthy communities and position our regions for the future.

For example, our organization is focused on coordinating a variety of programs on a regional basis including **[provide short example of efforts or plans to develop sustainable development programs]**.

Again, we respectfully urge you to co-sponsor the *Livable Communities Act*. We thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

NADO LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

SENATE CO-SPONSORS OF MENENDEZ LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ACT (S. 1621)

Daniel Akaka (D-HI)	Al Franken (D-MN)	Jack Reed (D-RI)
Michael Bennet (D-CO)	Tom Harkin (D-IA)	Bernard Sanders (I-VT)
Michael Blumenthal (D-CT)	Mary Landrieu (D-LA)	Charles Schumer (D-NY)
Benjamin Cardin (D-MD)	Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ)	Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
Christopher Coons (D-DE)	Patrick Leahy (D-VT)	Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
Richard Durbin (D-IL)	Jeff Merkley (D-OR)	Ron Wyden (D-OR)

HOUSE COSPONSORS OF PERMUTTER LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ACT (H.R. 3325)

Earl Blumenauer (D-OR)	Al Green (D-TX)	James P. Moran, (D-VA)
Lois Capps (D-CA)	Henry C. "Hank," Johnson, Jr. (D-GA)	Mike Quigley (D-IL)
Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO)	John B. Larson, (D-CT)	Albio Sires (D-NJ)
Bob Filner (D-CA)		Maxine Waters (D-CA)