

SAMPLE LETTER SUPPORTING THE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ACT

October XX, 2009

Dear Senator:

Please sign on as co-sponsor of the Livable Communities Act of 2009 (S.1619), introduced by Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.). We need more tools like this to promote sustainable communities that provide a range of housing options accessible to jobs and transit. This bill would create a new office within the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development to coordinate federal policies that foster sustainable development. It also would provide \$4 billion to assist local governments to invest in affordable places where people can live, work and play.

Affordable living – which takes into account the combined burden of transportation and housing costs -- is becoming less attainable for many working households, as fuel prices and trip lengths increase. In addition to supporting local communities in urban, suburban and rural regions to provide more affordable choices for all Americans, this legislation addresses employer interests in housing for a competitive workforce – near jobs and near transit.

Challenge grants proposed through the Livable Communities Act would help communities to plan, create and preserve affordable and workforce housing and transit-oriented development. These new resources also would improve public transportation, create walkable streets, and foster economic and community development. The first grants would help communities develop comprehensive regional plans that incorporate transportation, housing, community and economic development, and environmental needs. The majority of the funding, \$3.75 billion over three years, would fund a challenge grant program to implement projects identified in these comprehensive plans.

Because the bill also works to promote and implement interagency cooperation between the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and HUD on these issues, programs like New Starts grants for major transit capital investments and the Community Development Block Grant program could more efficiently assist communities in planning for and coordinating housing and transportation investments.

Sen. Dodd's Livable Communities Act represents an enormous opportunity for Congress to help families, municipalities and businesses alike. It sets the stage for true cooperation and collaboration between federal agencies that will have a real impact on how effectively our communities can plan for and invest in the future. We urge you to support this important legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.