



FEB 08 2012

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The Honorable Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

The Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) is writing to put forth our findings and recommendations regarding the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The Small Communities Subcommittee has been working with EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities to better inform the efforts of the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities on environmental and sustainable community issues particularly important to local governments across the country. The LGAC would like to express its full support for this Partnership.

The Committee recognizes the important work the Partnership for Sustainable Communities has accomplished in the short time since its inception in 2009 and recommends the EPA continue to actively participate in and expand the work of the Partnership.

The LGAC also recognizes the most important outcome from improved collaboration within the federal government is improved delivery of programs, and the Partnership for Sustainable Communities is accomplishing this.

The Committee puts forth the following findings:

1) Synergizes Community Efforts - The Partnership's efforts are supportive of the work that we are doing in our communities, and that is ongoing in other cities, suburbs, and small towns across the country. Broadly, the Partnership is coordinating federal housing, transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments to provide homes and transportation options working families can afford, jobs and services close to where people live, a clean and healthy environment, and vibrant neighborhoods that attract economic activity.

To do this, it is aligning agency priorities with each other and with the goals of communities. Ensuring that federal programs and funding work together allows the agencies to deliver their services in a way that leads to better economic and environmental results for communities and saves taxpayers money. It also helps communities leverage public investment in an era of fiscal restraint.

2) Targets Resources - The Partnership is also targeting resources to help communities protect clean air and water, improve quality of life for residents, and promote sustainable, homegrown economic development. Through 2011, the Partnership has announced a series of grants and other assistance totaling more than \$3 billion to support livability in over 500 communities and regions across the country. This includes EPA's Brownfields Area-Wide Planning and HUD's Regional Planning and Community Challenge grants, which provide valuable funding to support neighborhood, local, and regional planning efforts. These efforts can help communities increase their economic competitiveness by creating well thought out development—a critical process that communities might not be able to otherwise afford. The Partnership is also providing capacity building and technical assistance to local governments.

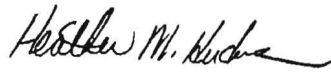
3) Removes Regulatory and Policy Barriers - Additionally, the Partnership is removing regulatory and policy barriers at the federal level to make it easier for state and local governments to access federal resources. The three agencies are working with state and local governments and groups like the LGAC to learn about federal policies that have hampered their work. With input from these stakeholders, the agencies are working to remove federal barriers and make it easier for communities to implement the type of development they want.

In conclusion, the Committee cites these findings and further recommends that the EPA work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to make that Department a full partner within the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. This could be a starting point for further collaboration between EPA and USDA on local environmental programs.

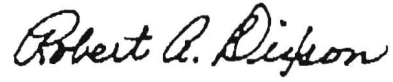
Many communities and local governments rely on the USDA's Extension Offices and other services for technical expertise and information. The ongoing coordination between the Partnership and USDA has led to successful projects, including the recent report *Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities*. By becoming a full member of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, USDA can enhance the delivery of federal programs from all four agencies, provide the perspective and expertise from years of work within communities across the country, expand the network of communities reached by the partnership, and help to advance the efforts of the Partnership to identify and remove federal barriers to sustainable development at the local level.

Thank you for considering our comments. The Committee appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the EPA, and looks forward to future work with the Agency and the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

Sincerely,



Mayor Heather McTeer Hudson
Chair
Local Government Advisory Committee
Subcommittee



Mayor Bob Dixon
Chair
Small Community Advisory

cc: John Frece
Tim Torma
Matthew Dalbey