

June XX, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer
Majority Leader, House of Representatives
H-107 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James E. Clyburn
Majority Whip, House of Representatives
H-329 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John B. Larson
Chairman, House Democratic Caucus
202A Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Hoyer, Whip Clyburn and Chairman Larson:

The tragic oil spill in the Gulf is a glaring reminder of the urgent need to reduce our nation's dependence on oil for the sake of our national security, economy, health and environment. As members of the House Livable Communities Task Force (LCTF), we write in support of promoting livable communities as means of achieving this critical goal.

The transportation sector accounts for almost three-quarters of U.S. oil consumption, and Americans consume over 10 percent of the world's oil just driving around. By transitioning American communities to more livable communities, we can dramatically reduce vehicle miles traveled and our nation's dependence on dangerous, dirty oil. Together with the Obama Administration's Partnership for Sustainable Communities, LCTF is working to identify the ways in which the federal government can enhance community livability, improve Americans' quality of life and reduce our expensive and unhealthy oil dependence.

Livable communities promote compact development, which allows people to live within walking or biking distance from most destinations. The density of livable communities reduces driving distances and allows for effective public transit services such as light rail, buses, and paratransit. Additionally, compact development fosters safe, reliable and economical transportation alternatives that will significantly decrease vehicle miles driven and reduce our nation's dependence on oil. We need to give people transportation choices so they do not have to burn a gallon of gasoline to buy a gallon of milk.

Although land use planning decisions are inherently local, there are a number of federal policies that can help communities increase transportation choice. Examples include: funding for public transit and active forms of transportation, alternatively fueled vehicles and infrastructure, tax and other incentives for greener forms of commuting, public education programs to increase awareness about existing transportation alternatives, incentives for transit-oriented and mixed-use development, preserving affordable housing near transit, building complete streets, and

redeveloping vacant properties. These policies will also save consumers money as gasoline prices continue their steep price climb and save communities money by offering affordable alternatives.

These are common sense policies and the tragedy in the Gulf only underscores the urgent need to eliminate our oil dependence. Livable communities offer a safer, cleaner, and more economical approach to reducing our nation's energy consumption, one that shifts us away from oil and toward clean, renewable sources of energy. Additionally, these policies create happier, healthier and more economically successful communities.

As the House moves forward on legislation responding to the oil spill, we urge you to consider policies that foster and encourage the development of livable communities as a way to reduce our dependence on oil. Thank you for your leadership advancing clean energy policies. We look forward to working with you on these important issues as we move forward.

Sincerely,