

## Happy Earth Day

Thousands of people gathered on the National Mall in April for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. While Earth Day is a time to renew our determination to address the major environmental issues of the day, such as climate change and energy security, it is also a time to highlight the environmental benefits of livable communities - places where people are safer, healthier and more economically secure.

The Livable Communities Task Force (LCTF) is working to enact policies that help reduce America's dependence on fossil fuels, reduce carbon emissions, improve public health, and jumpstart local economies. This means providing people with low-carbon transportation choices, such as public transit, walking and biking. This will help improve quality of life for people of all ages, so that kids can walk to school, low-income communities can have better access to public transit, and senior citizens can easily get around.

## Livable Communities in the President's Budget

In February, LCTF members lauded the Obama administration's FY 2011 Budget for livable communities. Livability funding included \$150 million for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Sustainable Communities, \$100 million of which would be available for planning grants for communities to support the linking of transportation and land use planning; \$527 million for the Department of Transportation to help state and local governments invest in smarter transportation infrastructure that leverages sustainable development; and \$11.23 million for the Environmental Protection Agency to participate in the Partnership with HUD and DOT, as well as to provide technical assistance to state, tribal, regional, and local governments. LCTF members sent letters to the Appropriations Subcommittees on [Transportation, Housing and Urban Development](#) and [Interior, Environment and Related Agencies](#) expressing support for these programs.

## Legislative Action

On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, the House Financial Services Committee [passed H.R. 2336, the Green Resources for Energy Efficient Neighborhoods \(GREEN\) Act](#)

. This legislation, by LCTF member Ed Perlmutter, would increase energy efficiency in HUD-financed housing, establish a residential energy efficiency block grant program for single- or multi-family housing, and encourage the Federal Housing Authority to offer energy efficient and location efficient mortgages.

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, members of the LCTF, led by Chairman Earl Blumenauer, [introduced H.R. 4722, the Active Community Transportation Act of 2010](#)

. This bill will fund community efforts to provide transportation options that improve community vitality, reduce carbon pollution, boost public health, and create jobs. The legislation is co-sponsored by LCTF members Russ Carnahan, Emanuel Cleaver, Steve Cohen, Gerry Connolly, Jay Inslee, Jim McDermott, George Miller, James Moran, Tim Ryan, Allyson Schwartz, Albio Sires, and Peter Welch.

On Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, members of the LCTF, led by Rep. Ed Perlmutter, [introduced H.R. 4690, the Livable Communities Act.](#)

The bill establishes a grant program administered by HUD to assist local governments in planning for and creating better, more affordable places to live and work. It also creates at HUD an Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities. LCTF members Deborah Halvorson, Earl Blumenauer, James Himes, Albio Sires, Andre Carson, Russ Carnahan, Rush Holt, Steve Cohen, Mike Quigley, Allyson Y. Schwartz, Paul Tonko and Jim McDermott are original co-sponsors of the legislation.

For information on other LCTF member legislative initiatives, please see our [website](#) .

## **In the News**

Illinois State Legislature Passes Housing and Transportation Affordability Index Act

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, The Illinois House of Representatives passed SB 374, which requires use of the Center for Neighborhood Technology's Housing and Transportation Affordability (H+T) Index by the Illinois Housing Development Authority, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois Finance Authority, the Illinois Capital Development Board and the Illinois Dept. of Transportation in various screening, planning, investment priority setting and goal setting activities. The new index will provide the State of Illinois with a new planning tool to take transportation costs into account when measuring housing affordability. This will in turn help them take steps to lower the cost of living for families. The legislation now awaits Governor Quinn's signature.

### **Upcoming Events of Interest:**

#### Livable Communities and Philadelphia

On Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, LCTF Members Earl Blumenauer and Allyson Y. Schwartz will join Penn Design School's Penn Praxis and the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia for a panel discussion of Livable Communities and Philadelphia. The panel will be moderated by Harris M. Steinberg, FAIA of Penn Design School.

#### Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Financing Forum

The Center for Transit Oriented Development, American Institute of Architects, the National Housing Conference, LOCUS, and Transportation for America are holding a Transit-Oriented Development Financing Forum from 1pm - 5pm on May 17<sup>th</sup> in the US Capitol Visitors Center Congressional Meeting Room South. For more information, contact Sasha Forbes at T4America: [gsforbes@reconnectinamerica.org](mailto:gsforbes@reconnectinamerica.org) This e-mail address is being protected from spam bots, you need JavaScript enabled to view it

### **Learn More**

We appreciate your interest in LCTF's work, and we will keep you informed of happenings both

on and off Capitol Hill. For more information, feel free to visit [the LCTF website](#) .

Sincerely,

*Earl Blumenauer and Members of the Livable Community Task Force*