

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Congress undercuts support for American neighborhoods by defunding HUD portion of Sustainable Communities initiative

Community Progress CEO Dan Kildee issues statement urging restored funding for HUD Sustainable Communities partnership

Despite thousands of phone calls, emails, letters and direct outreach to elected officials, the House budget conference committee failed to include funding for HUD's Sustainable Communities partnership effort for the 2012 budget year. The following is a statement from Dan Kildee, President and CEO of Center for Community Progress.

November 15, 2011:

This is a disappointing development, and a missed opportunity for Congress – and for hundreds of communities that have used support through this program to craft development and conservation strategies that protect the environment and make our neighborhoods more beautiful, diverse and economically vibrant.

Since its inception two years ago, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities has helped local governments cut costs, work smarter and strengthen local neighborhoods – exactly the kinds of strategies we need as our nation continues to struggle with one of the most persistent and devastating economic downturns since the Great Depression.

We can ill afford the kind of ideological rigidity that derailed this funding for HUD's contribution to this effort. By slashing funding for the HUD portion of this multi-agency partnership, which includes the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency, Congress has rejected support for one of the federal government's most effective tools to rebuild our neighborhoods and encourage government at all levels to work more effectively.

The Sustainable Communities initiative makes it possible to build and rehab homes near regional employment centers, encourage government partnerships that deliver services more efficiently, and embrace model programs pioneered by other communities that help save hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for infrastructure and other vital needs. The effort has streamlined policy, helped local governments strengthen regional economies, helped municipalities use infrastructure more effectively, and fostered investments in practical initiatives that improve the quality of life for people across the nation. Cutting transportation costs, improving access to jobs, strengthening cheaper and more environmentally friendly transportation options – Sustainable Communities grants helped power all of these initiatives and more.

We need better growth strategies for our nation's cities and towns. Advocates of this kind of responsible public investment – investment that saves dollars and improves living conditions for Americans over the long run – will certainly continue to rally support for this kind of investment. Cutting funding for this important initiative is a mistake that must be corrected.

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