

February 2, 2009

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S. William Becker

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA), we write to offer our association's perspectives on the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan*. We commend you and your colleagues for seeking to address the economic crisis facing our nation, and support your desire to save and create jobs, jumpstart the economy and lay the foundation for recovery. However, as we explain below, it is critical that investment in our nation's infrastructure ensure that projects enhance, not impede, environmental protection.

The members of NACAA – an association of air pollution control agencies in 53 states and territories and over 165 metropolitan areas across the country – are invested with primary responsibility for ensuring clean, healthful air for our citizens. As such, NACAA applauds the inclusion in the Plan of measures to spur a clean energy economy. These measures – such as increasing capacity to generate alternative energy sources; transforming the energy grid to improve the transmission, distribution and production of clean energy; making public buildings more energy efficient; weatherizing homes of low-income families; and financing grants and loans to state and local governments for projects that reduce diesel emissions – will not only reduce our dependence on foreign oil, but also yield critical environmental and public health and welfare benefits, including greenhouse gas reductions that will aid in the fight to stem global warming.

NACAA also recognizes the vital importance of measures related to the other priority areas identified in the Plan. We note with great interest the rebuilding of America's roads and bridges and investments in infrastructure, for which the Plan proposes to dedicate tens of billions of dollars. We embrace your vision with respect to the role of this priority in our nation's economic recovery. At the same time, we believe that robust economic growth can and should live side by side with responsible stewardship of our environment, including our air. Therefore, we strongly encourage that the selection of road, bridge and other infrastructure projects to be funded under the Plan include a "green screen" process to ensure the stimulation of infrastructure projects that will enhance, rather than impede, protection of the environment and public health and welfare. For example, road and other construction projects should be subject, among other things, to appropriate site selection criteria and requirements for the use of low-emitting construction equipment fitted with advanced emission control technologies; road paints low in volatile organic compounds; and strategies to reduce, reuse and recycle materials.

Toward this end, we urge that in your forthcoming discussions of this bill, as well as your oversight of it once it is signed into law, you ensure that the disbursement of stimulus funds be based on criteria that are consistent not only with our nation's economic priorities, but also with our environmental priorities.

A healthy economy goes hand in hand with a healthy environment and a healthy population. We hope you will agree it is critical that, when implemented, the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan* can and should remain faithful to all of these goals.

Once again, NACAA applauds your economic recovery efforts and stands ready to assist you in this endeavor in any way we can. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact either of us or S. William Becker, NACAA's Executive Director.

Sincerely,



Colleen Cripps
Nevada
NACAA Co-President



Arturo J. Blanco
Houston, Texas
NACAA Co-President