

**American Rivers ▪ Apollo Alliance ▪ Defenders of Wildlife ▪
Earthjustice ▪ Environment America ▪ League of Conservation Voters ▪
National Audubon Society ▪ National Wildlife Federation ▪ Natural
Resources Defense Council ▪ Sierra Club ▪ Physicians for Social
Responsibility ▪ The Wilderness Society**

February 11, 2009

Dear Conferee,

We are writing to express our support for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This multibillion dollar package will help protect our environment and reinvigorate our nation's flagging economy by investing in the innovative technologies and the environmentally responsible infrastructure and practices we need to guarantee our economic competitiveness.

As you move to conference on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, we urge you to prioritize economic recovery policies that, reduce our dependence on oil, help fight global warming, and create green jobs. Investing now in renewable energy, green infrastructure, and energy efficiency will have both immediate economic benefits and lay the foundation for lasting fiscal stability. We encourage passing a green economic recovery bill as soon as possible that:

Invests in Job-Creating Energy Efficiency: The quickest and cheapest way to create green jobs and reduce our energy costs is to invest in programs that reduce demand and save money. According to the University of Massachusetts, investing in energy efficiency creates *four times more jobs* than spending the same amount in the oil industry and 300,000 more jobs than stimulating household consumption. Final legislation should adopt the House \$3.4 billion State Energy Program that encourages states to adopt pro-energy efficiency utility regulatory reforms and more stringent building energy codes. The \$6.2 billion for weatherization and \$6 billion for green federal buildings in the House bill should be retained. President Obama committed to weatherize 1 million homes and improve the efficiency of existing buildings by 25 percent over the next decade. The amount of weatherization funding in the House bill will reduce net fuel consumption by 23 percent and will create or preserve 142,500 jobs. The Senate version of the tax credit for home efficiency upgrades should also be adopted because it would more effectively promote energy efficiency and cost less.

Makes the Clean Energy Tax Incentives Effective: We also urge you to include the House Department of Energy (DOE) grant program for renewable energy projects that are eligible to receive business tax credits, which have been greatly reduced in value because of the recession. The DOE grant program would provide grants in lieu of credits for projects going into service over the next two years. This program will help ensure that many wind and solar projects already underway will continue despite the recession, thus protecting 254,000 current or new jobs and significantly reducing global warming

pollution. We also recommend that the efficient appliance manufacturer tax credit be included in the DOE grant

Increases Funding for Public Transit: Improve the ratio between highway and transit funding to increase funding for transit. The House bill provides \$12 billion for badly needed improvements to our nation's transit systems. Investment in public transit construction creates 19 percent more jobs than investment in new highway construction per dollar invested and will reduce global warming pollution. Adopting these provisions will create or preserve more than 360,000 quality jobs and reduce oil consumption by more than 12 million barrels of oil per year. The Senate bill provides \$2 billion for high speed rail and provides flexibility to use highway money available for intercity rail investments. These provisions are worthy of inclusion in the final bill. Last, we urge that conference report language clarify that projects that bring our transportation system into a state of better repair, promote energy independence and reduce global warming pollution should receive favorable consideration by transportation agencies.

Removes Billions of Dollars in Giveaways to Nuclear Power and Liquid Coal: The Senate bill allows the DOE to hand out \$50 billion in energy loan guarantees. The loan guarantee program covers nuclear technology, and coal technologies including liquid coal, as well as renewable energy. Both nuclear power and liquid coal are risky, dirty and expensive technologies. Congress should adopt the House bill's language which creates and funds a new section 1705 to support only clean technologies such as renewable energy and next generation biofuels. Investments in renewable energy, such as wind and solar produce greater and quicker near-term economic benefits without the significant environmental dangers of coal, nuclear power, and conventional biofuels.

Invests in Clean and Safe Water Infrastructure: The House bill provides \$6 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), \$2 billion more than the Senate. We support at least that level of funding for clean water, and at least \$2 billion for the Safe Drinking State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), which is already in both bills. According to the American Public Works Association, this \$2 billion increase in clean and safe water funding would create about 70,000 jobs. This funding must be put to work developing our new green economy. We support the set-asides that were in each of the bills for green infrastructure and water efficiency and urge you to provide no less than 20% of the funding dedicated as subsidization ("principal forgiveness") for green infrastructure and water efficiency projects, as currently in the House version of the bill. Projects funded under the State Revolving Funds reduce pollution to rivers, lakes, and coastal waters to make them safe for drinking, swimming, and fishing; protect groundwater and surface water supplies and provide treatment necessary to protect public health; and prevent flooding, sewer overflows, and other forms of property damage.

Eliminate mandated waivers of inland waterway cost-sharing: The waiver could result in substantial environmental harm and raise taxpayer subsidies to an unprecedented 100 percent. Substantial differences exist between House and Senate versions and we strongly urge these *earmark-type* waivers to be stricken or substantially scaled down in the final legislation.

Maintain the House funding levels for school modernization: The funding for K-12 schools (\$14 billion) and institutions of higher education (\$6 billion) with a 25% set aside for green schools, green job education and training through the Department of Labor (\$500 million), and energy efficiency and sustainability grants and loans at the Department of Energy (\$1.5 billion) should be included in the final bill. Funding these programs will create jobs today and prepare generations for the green jobs of the future

Retain the Senate USDA energy program funding levels; USDA energy programs can play a critical role in building green jobs for the rural economy, including construction and development of advanced biofuel refineries, renewable energy systems, efficiency improvements, and the development of next generation feedstocks.

Provides an investment in green jobs through habitat restoration and natural resource management on public lands: The overall House funding levels are preferred for the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Parks, Forest Service, and NRCS watershed and flood prevention investment in programs and Senate funding level for Bureau of Land Management while the Senate funding specifications within those programs, particularly in regard to adaptive-management responses to climate change, are preferred except for Forest Service where the House language is superior. The overall funding level for NOAA from the Senate bill, \$1.2 billion, is preferred while providing within that amount not less than \$400 million for the restoration activities outlined in the House bill. Final legislation should restrict any increased funding for wildfire management to projects in and around communities at greatest risk from wildfire. In addition, we recommend that \$150 million for State Wildlife Grants, with non-federal match requirements waived or minimized, be made available for State and local habitat conservation grants through funding already set aside in the bills for state economic assistance. Finally, we recommend that the \$250 million in the Senate version of the bill dedicated to environmental restoration for the Army Corps of Engineers remain is the final version of this important legislation.

We urge you to ensure that the final version of H.R. 1 incorporates the recommendations above. We must continue the progress we have made with bold investments in clean energy and energy efficiency that will curb global warming pollution while creating good jobs across the country. We stand ready to work with you to pass a green recovery bill as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

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