

Date

The Honorable First & Last Name

Address

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Re: Clean, Low-Emission, Affordable, New Transportation Efficiency Act

Dear Representative [REDACTED]:

I am writing to urge your support of the Clean, Low-Emissions, Affordable, New Transportation Efficiency Act (H.R. 1329). We applaud the goal of this bill to increase mobility options, reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and to reduce the use of petroleum-derived transportation fuel. In particular, [ORGANIZATION] supports awarding grant to for the important development of greenways and other alternative strategies to encourage pedestrian and bike travel and to reduce VMT.

ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS:

a. Walkability

Traditional street networks typically have short blocks and numerous through streets, providing pedestrians with multiple routes to reach their destinations. However, conventional street networks have been built with minimal or no through streets and walkways (picture lots of suburban cul-de-sacs). Retrofitting conventional street networks using natural features such as bioswales, greenways with tree-shaded paths, and other open spaces will provide a necessary link to getting community members where they need to go but on foot or bike. In the urban setting, trees must be planned. They don't always instinctively grow in a pleasing and usable fashion.

b. Revitalization

Well-maintained sidewalks with attractive and shade-providing landscapes are a more enticing environment for walking and biking. For example, in cooperation with the City of Calabasas, the California Department of Transportation was able to mitigate traffic spillover from the nearby Ventura Freeway and enhance downtown walkability. Through the use of extensive tree planting and preservation of existing trees, and the incorporation of boardwalks, bicycle lanes, and bus turnout bays, the city created a pedestrian friendly destination. As a result, the downtown design improvements have increased tourism and economic activity.

c. Cleaner Air

Along with increased walkability trees and greenways work to enhance the health of a city. Cities benefit from cleaner air as trees and vegetation filter out pollutants by day and produce oxygen by night. For example, trees in New York City removed an estimated 1,821 metric tons of air pollutants in 1994. In an area with 100 percent tree cover (such as contiguous forests stands within parks), trees can remove from the air as much as 15 percent of the ozone, 14 percent of the sulfur dioxide, 13 percent of the particulate matter, 8 percent of the nitrogen dioxide, and 0.05 percent of the carbon monoxide.

d. Public Health & Education

Beyond the recreational opportunities offered by greenways and parks, a growing body of research shows that contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health. The urban open spaces provided through greenways provide improved learning opportunities in the form of outdoor classrooms. One important study researched the recoveries of surgical patients in a Pennsylvania hospital. The rooms of some patients overlooked a stand of trees, while others faced a brown brick wall. A review of ten years of medical records showed that patients with tree views had shorter hospitalizations, less need for painkillers, and fewer negative comments in the nurses' notes, compared with patients with brick-wall views.

e. Energy Efficiency and Water Quality

In addition to the enhanced human health aspects of trees, greenways provide benefits to the health of city infrastructures. Trees act as natural air conditioners to help keep cities cooler, mitigating the effects of concrete and glass that can turn cities into ovens under the summer sun. The evaporation from a single large tree can produce the cooling effect of ten room-size air conditioners operating 24 hours a day. Besides cooling, trees enhance the health of communities by mitigating storm water. The City of Garland, Texas used an innovative method to encourage private-property owners to plant more trees. It mapped all the impervious surfaces in the city and then changed the formula for charging stormwater fees to property owners. Instead of tying the fee to property value or charging a flat fee, the city now bases the fees on the property's impervious surface and the volume of stormwater the property generates. An analysis showed that Garland's tree cover saves it from having to handle an additional 19 million cubic feet of stormwater. Building facilities to handle that stormwater would have cost \$3.8 million.

The **ORGANIZATION** believes that the Clean, Low-Emission, Affordable, New Transportation Efficiency Act (H.R. 1329) is an excellent method for reducing VMT, increasing alternative modes of transportation, and enhancing the environment. We urge your support on this bill.

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE
ORGANIZATION