

Date

The Honorable First & Last Name

Address

Address

Re: GREEN Act (H.R. 2336)

Dear Representative [REDACTED]:

I am writing to urge you to co-sponsor the Green Resources for Energy Efficient Neighborhoods (GREEN) Act (H.R. 2336). We applaud the goal of this bill to make green infrastructure and energy efficient homes more affordable. In particular, ORGANIZATION supports awarding grants for the implementation of green infrastructure as one of the most effective ways to improve quality of life, create green jobs, foster energy independence, and improve the general environment.

ONE OR TWO OF THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS:

a. Green Buildings

Sustainable affordable homes are accessible to employment and educational opportunities, and ones that people of limited means can afford to own, operate, and maintain over the long-term. They create stable, strong communities and are efficiently designed and built to minimize impact, reduce utility costs, and create healthy environments that improve air quality, have access to recreational opportunities, and are safe. The GREEN Act leverages the tremendous power of green building by providing incentives to promote the interconnected goals of affordability and sustainability. From locations near public transit and employment to the integration of energy efficiency best practices, green building can improve the health and economic well being of our nation's families and communities.

b. Neighborhood Stabilization

Property values of homes with trees in the landscape are 5-20% higher than equivalent properties without trees, and even newly landscape trees in the front yard can increase home sales prices by 1%. Also, rental properties along tree-lined streets rent for higher prices and with less turnover. By helping families and individuals secure dependable, healthy, affordable housing, we increase their chances of success in all areas of their lives. Part of that equation calls on developers and city planners to go beyond just addressing the affordability issue to include a focus on health and environmental impacts. As we've seen economic growth in the U.S. slow down, consumers are being hit hard by the twin burdens of a sagging housing market and rising energy prices. It's time to invest wisely in protecting family budgets and stabilizing neighborhoods through green infrastructure. This bill will make environmentally-friendly building more accessible and save us all money in the long run.

c. Energy Security

Heating and cooling homes accounts for nearly 60% of residential electricity usage in the United States. It is also estimated that warming trends will increase air-conditioning use by 3-8%, which is 20 million more barrels of oil at a cost of \$2 billion annually. Ironically, all of those fossil fuels that we burn to stay cooler. As Americans face extraordinary energy costs, the GREEN Act incorporates landscape architecture practices like site planning, targeted tree plantings, and other green infrastructure techniques that will not only lower monthly utility bills, but lay the groundwork for more healthy, sustainable communities around the country.

This timely legislation reflects foresight and the considered input of a broad coalition of housing advocates, home builders, financial institutions, government leaders, developers, and the environmental community. Specifically, we are most supportive that the bill merges affordable housing incentives with nonprofit greening organizations in the implementation of neighborhood stabilization, stipulates that not less than 50% of paved surfaces be green, asks that developers account for how their construction will affect existing trees, and recommends that HUD consult with greening organizations in the development and maintenance of green affordable housing.

ORGANIZATION believes that the Green Communities Act (H.R. 2336) is an excellent method for stabilizing neighborhoods and growing the local economy. We urge you to co-sponsor this bill.

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE
ORGANIZATION