

Date

The Honorable First & Last Name

Address

Address

Re: American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009

Dear Senator [REDACTED]:

I am writing to urge you to introduce two provisions to the Senate version of the American Clean Energy and Security Act that were recently passed in the House. They are:

SEC. 205. TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

We applaud the goal of this provision to encourage utility companies to partner with local nonprofit tree planting organizations to plant trees to reduce residential and small business energy demand. In particular, **ORGANIZATION** supports awarding grants for the planting of shade trees as one of the most effective ways to help homeowners and small businesses lower their electric bills by reducing energy demand, while helping utilities lower their peak load demand.

ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS:

- a.** In dozens of cities across the United States, increasing urban tree cover has generated \$2-5 in savings for every dollar invested in tree planting. Trees lower temperatures through shade, the cooling effects of which can save millions of energy dollars. Even on a residential level, just 3-4 shade trees located strategically around a house can cut summer cooling costs by 30-50%. Multiplied by one million trees, that's \$10 million in energy savings.
- b.** As air temperatures rise, so does the demand for air-conditioning. This leads to higher emissions from power plants, as well as increased smog formation as a result of warmer temperatures. In the United States, this increase in air temperature is responsible for 5-10% of urban peak electric demand for A/C use, and as much as 20% of population-weighted smog concentrations in urban areas. Today, the utility sector is already the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, producing approximately one-third of the country's emissions.
- c.** Heating and cooling homes accounts for nearly 60% of residential electricity usage in the United States. Luckily, energy improvements are as simple as planting trees. Researchers at the USDA Forest Service and Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory support what you may already know... that tree shaded homes are more energy efficient and that energy security is linked to the environment.
- d.** Shade trees produce significant clean air benefits. Every 100 large trees removes about 200 pounds of particulate matter, 300 pounds of ozone, and five tons of carbon dioxide from the air each year.

SEC. 295. MAKING IT GREEN

We applaud the goal of this provision 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 OF THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS:

- a.** 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. 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. 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 utilities, housing advocates, government leaders, and the environmental community. **ORGANIZATION** believes that these two provisions (Sec. 205 and 295 of the American Clean Energy and Security Act) are excellent methods for stabilizing neighborhoods and growing the local economy. We urge you to introduce similar provisions into the Senate version of this bill.

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE
ORGANIZATION