



Dear Member of Congress,

We, the under-signed organizations, believe federal policies should support the rejuvenation of our nation's urban areas. We write today to ask that you show your support for these communities by co-sponsoring HR 932, The Community Regeneration, Sustainability, and Innovation Act of 2009. This unique legislation would establish a holistic planning process that would facilitate the reclamation of vacant properties, target resources, generate green jobs, and foster sustainable reuse and redevelopment.

Many of the communities we represent have struggled for decades to maintain vibrant and healthy neighborhoods while contending with loss of traditional employment opportunities and sharp population declines. Questionable lending practices and the continued loss of employment as the result of the current recession have compounded the struggles and extended neighborhood decline to the first tier suburbs and beyond. As a result, countless properties become vacant and/or abandoned for years leaving communities with an excess of deteriorating housing stock, closed-down businesses, and blighted lots that severely strain municipal tax bases.

While much of America has witnessed a troubling surge in foreclosure rates and property vacancy over the past two years, a subset of communities have suffered disproportionately from longstanding disinvestment and face challenges that extend far beyond the current mortgage crisis. We commend Congress for passing the Neighborhood Stabilization Program; the legislation has addressed many consequences that stem from foreclosure-related vacancy. However, additional measures need to be put in place to help address the particular challenges in regions that are not growing and are not currently poised to make a significant market recovery in the near-term.

Specifically, we ask that you support HR 932. This legislation offers help to these cities and towns that are seeking to channel new policies, programs, and projects into transformative revitalization efforts. The Community Regeneration, Sustainability, and Innovation Act of 2009 targets—and gives hope to—the millions of Americans whose communities have been compromised by the off-shoring of employment opportunities and federal and state incentives that have unintentionally encouraged disinvestment and decay in our existing communities. Components of the bill include:

- Creation of a new pilot program and a dedicated funding stream within HUD targeted toward cities experiencing large-scale property vacancy and population losses. The program would provide for collaborative strategic planning and innovative reuse of vacant land.
- Resources to build the capacity of local governments to prevent, demolish, manage, and reclaim vacant and abandoned properties through an array of effective strategies and tools.
- Authorization of a host of projects like urban agriculture, renewable energy production, and green infrastructure that re-imagine the way our cities reuse vacant land and buildings.

We urge you to join your colleagues in co-sponsoring HR 932.

Sincerely,



### **National Organizations**

American Planning Association  
Center for Neighborhood Technology  
Enterprise Community Partners  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
National Vacant Properties Campaign  
The Northeast-Midwest Institute  
Smart Growth America

### **State and Local Organizations**

Center for Planning Excellence (LA)  
Cleveland Restoration Society (OH)  
Conservation Alabama Foundation (AL)  
Conservation Law Foundation (NH)  
Empire State Future (NY)  
Futurewise (WA)  
Genesee Institute (MI)  
Greater Ohio Policy Center (OH)  
Grow Smart Rhode Island (RI)  
Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Central New York, Inc. (NY)  
Metropolitan Planning Council (IL)  
New Jersey Future (NJ)  
New Orleans Vacant Properties Initiative (LA)  
Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PA)  
Slavic Village Development (OH)  
Smart Growth Vermont (VT)  
1000 Friends of Connecticut (CT)  
1000 Friends of Oregon (OR)  
1000 Friends of Iowa (IA)  
1000 Friends of Minnesota (MN)  
10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania (PA)