



The United States Conference of Mayors

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Tuesday, December 8, 2009

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U.S. MAYORS PRAISE PRESIDENT OBAMA FOR SUPPORTING FISCAL RELIEF FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND STATES, TARGETED INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT, SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL

Statement from Tom Cochran, USCM CEO and Executive Director

Washington, D.C. -- "The President and his advisors have been meeting with U.S. mayors. The President understands the jobs and fiscal crisis happening in America's cities, and he is calling for action," Conference of Mayors CEO and Executive Director Tom Cochran said today following President Obama's jobs address.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors has developed *A Call to Action* which highlights the ongoing jobs crisis in America's cities - predicted to last for years - and the need for more targeted investments in cities and local infrastructure to create jobs.

One of the key action items called for by mayors is "Targeted Fiscal Relief for High Unemployment Cities and Metro Areas." Cities all across the country have faced significant layoffs and budgetary cutbacks this summer, with dire local revenue projections in the coming years. ARRA provided significant fiscal assistance to states, but none to local governments. The recession is now having drastic effects at the local level. Therefore, mayors are calling on the Administration and Congress to develop a fiscal assistance program targeted to cities with high rates of unemployment and budget shortfalls. This is needed to prevent even deeper layoffs in critical areas such as public safety and public works, and help cities promote private sector job creation through local infrastructure projects.

In his address today, the President said, Congress should extend "relief to states and localities to prevent layoffs." And during the recent White House Jobs Summit on December 3 - attended by five mayors - the President said, "As tough as this financial crisis or recession has been on the federal budget, it has in some cases been worse on state and local government budgets.... Usually, state and local government revenues lag the recovery as a whole. They may need some more help from the federal government... If you see a complete collapse in state and local government spending on basic needs, that could create a very bad business climate for all of you."

The President also called for more targeted infrastructure investment in programs such as TIGER grants and public transit, as well as support for small business lending - all strongly supported by mayors.

The Conference of Mayors is working closely with both the Administration and Congress to ensure that in this jobs bill, more resources and infrastructure projects go directly to cities and local areas - ensuring they are not stalled in state bureaucracies - so that more jobs can be created now.

"Mayors can be the catalyst for creating public and private sector jobs quickly, which is exactly what this economy needs now," Cochran added.

A copy of the USCM report *A Call to Action* is available at usmayors.org.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.