



1307 New York Avenue, NW • Fifth Floor • Washington, DC 20005-4701
202.293.7070 • fax 202.296.5819 • aascu.org

March 15, 2010

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
U.S. House of Representatives
2301 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Fattah:

On behalf of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), I urge that a pilot demonstration program to strengthen the capacity of institutions of higher education to engage in university-community partnerships be funded under the Department of Housing and Urban Development for fiscal year 2011.

Our nation's metropolitan regions are the building blocks of our national economy, yet they face a number of mounting challenges such as ineffective education systems, stagnant economic growth, aging infrastructure, and social inequity. Institutions of higher education, as leading employers and economic drivers for their communities, possess a broad range of skills and resources – intellectual, human, technological, and social – to engage in these urban challenges. They also have a strong incentive to play an active role in shaping the future of their cities and regions, as unlike corporate headquarters they cannot pick up and leave a community or region when hardships occur.

Reports and studies reveal that institutions of higher education are interested in engaging in productive local and regional partnerships that foster economic and community development. In many cases efforts are currently under way to produce such outcomes. Unfortunately these efforts are often ad hoc, transitory, and command too few resources relative to the scope and scale of the issues that need to be addressed. **The demonstration pilot program will provide funding to enable institutions of higher education to strengthen their capacities to leverage their resources and effectively and efficiently create sustainable collaborative partnerships with their communities and regions.**

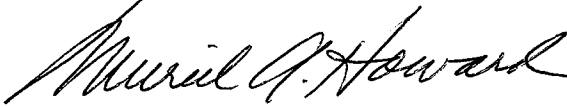
We respectfully ask that the following language be included in the fiscal year 2011 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Initiative:

Within funding for the Sustainable Communities Initiative, not less than 4% shall be designated for a demonstration pilot program for institutions of higher education. The

pilot program shall provide funds to institutions of higher education to strengthen their institutional capacity to identify, implement and lead housing, transportation, economic development, land use, environmental, energy, green space and water infrastructure sustainable strategies throughout their regions. Funding shall be targeted at institutions of higher education that are interested in engaging with regional partners in creating economic development and spurring economic competitiveness in distressed communities and neighborhoods.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Muriel A. Howard". The signature is written in black ink and extends across the width of the page.

Muriel A. Howard
AASCU President

MAH/kbl