



THE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ACT (S. 1619) BILL SUMMARY

Helping Communities Create More Sustainable Futures for Our Families And Businesses

Planning for More Livable Communities: The Comprehensive Planning Grant Program will foster livable communities by helping communities develop comprehensive regional plans that incorporate transportation, long-term affordable and accessible housing, community and economic development, and environmental needs. Selection criteria and eligible activities are flexible to allow all sizes and types of communities - rural, suburban, and urban - to plan for a more sustainable future. The Act authorizes \$475 million in competitive grant funds over four years. Local demand for this assistance is great: hundreds of communities from across the country have already expressed interest in applying for similar comprehensive planning funds appropriated for FY10.

Implementing Sustainable Development Projects: The Challenge Grant Program will enable communities to implement cross-cutting projects according to their comprehensive regional plans. With \$2.2 billion authorized for competitive grants over three years, these projects will help communities create and preserve affordable housing; support transit-oriented development; improve public transportation; create pedestrian and bicycle thoroughfares; redevelop brownfields; and foster economic development. Communities that aren't ready to undertake a regional comprehensive plan can apply for more targeted grants to update local land use, zoning, and building codes to promote sustainable development or improve building code enforcement to increase energy efficiency and disaster resilience.

Empowering Communities and Reducing Federal Bureaucracy

Interagency Council on Sustainable Communities: The bill establishes an Interagency Council on Sustainable Development to bring together the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other federal agencies to identify federal barriers to sustainable development at the local level. The Council will coordinate federal sustainable development policies and research agendas and promote coordination of transportation, housing, community development, energy, and environmental programs to eliminate paperwork and bureaucratic delays for state and local partners implementing complex projects involving multiple federal agencies.

Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities: The bill establishes an Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities within HUD to administer the Department's sustainability initiatives; implement and oversee Livable Communities grant programs in coordination with the Interagency Council; and provide guidance, best practices, and technical assistance to ensure that communities of all sizes learn from each other's successes.