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Energy Efficiency  
and Community  
Revitalization  
Provisions Rank  
High in Stimulus  
Spending Plan

## ***FEDERAL UPDATE***

### House Leadership Unveils \$825 Billion Stimulus Plan

The House leadership released details of a broad outline for an \$825 billion stimulus package on Thursday to address the on-going economic crisis. Of particular interest on the \$550 billion spending side of the package were a number of provisions addressing energy efficiency in affordable housing and schools, as well as preservation of buildings of historic and cultural importance located on public lands and in national parks. Community reinvestment also ranked high in importance with funding provided for brownfields restoration, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Below is a summary of these provisions.

- **Energy Efficiency Housing Retrofits:** \$2.5 billion for a new program to upgrade HUD sponsored low-income housing to increase energy efficiency, including new insulation, windows, and furnaces. Funds will be competitively awarded.
- **Energy Efficiency Grants and Loans for Institutions:** \$1.5 billion for energy sustainability and efficiency grants and loans to help school districts, institutes of higher education, local governments, and municipal utilities implement projects that will make them more energy efficient.
- **Home Weatherization:** \$6.2 billion to help low-income families reduce their energy costs by weatherizing their homes and make our country more energy efficient.
- **Construction on Public Lands and Parks:** \$3.1 billion for infrastructure projects on federal lands including improvements to visitor facilities, road and trail restoration, preservation of buildings of cultural and historic importance, rehabilitation of abandoned mines and oil fields, and environmental cleanup projects. This includes \$1.8 billion for the National Park Service, \$325 million for the Bureau of Land Management, \$300 million for the National Wildlife Refuges and National Fish Hatcheries, and \$650 million for the Forest Service.
- **Brownfields:** \$100 million for competitive grants for evaluation and cleanup of former industrial and commercial sites - turning them from problem properties to productive community use. Last year EPA was only able to fund 37% of Brownfields applications.
- **HOME Investment Partnerships:** \$1.5 billion to help local communities build and rehabilitate low-income housing using green technologies. Thousands of ready-to-go housing projects have been stalled by the credit crunch. Funds are distributed by formula.
- **Neighborhood Stabilization:** \$4.2 billion to help communities purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed, vacant properties in order to

Preservation Tax  
Proposal Expands  
on Existing Non-  
Business Energy  
Tax Credit to  
Provide Energy  
Efficiency  
Retrofits for  
Historic  
Homeowners

House and Senate  
Mark Up to  
Address Stimulus  
and Unfinished  
Appropriations  
Bills from 110<sup>th</sup>  
Congress

create more affordable housing and reduce neighborhood blight.

- **Community Development Block Grants:** \$1 billion for community and economic development projects including housing and services for those hit hard by tough economic times.

### National Trust Tax Proposal for Stimulus

Prior to the release of the stimulus plan, the National Trust circulated copies of the tax portion its preservation stimulus package to the House and Senate leadership, as well as key committee chairmen and ranking members with jurisdiction over the various portions of the stimulus plan.

The National Trust legislative tax credit proposal, which addresses energy efficiency retrofits for historic homes, is an expansion of the non-business energy tax credit, which was created under Section 1333 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, from a 10% credit capped at \$500 to a 20% credit with a maximum cap of \$5,000 to provide enough incentive for historic homeowners to make energy-efficiency retrofits. The goal of the proposed incentive is 50 percent greater energy efficiency in historic and older homes within ten years (using 2003 emissions levels) with the goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2030. In addition, the tax proposal includes provisions for Location Efficient Mortgages (LEM) to promote “livable and walkable” communities; loan guarantees (which could be combined with LEMs) under Section 104 of the National Historic Preservation Act that would be made by lenders to finance any project for the preservation of a property included in the National Register; a new ‘smart location’ tax credit for developers and homebuyers modeled after the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and linked to the US Green Building Council’s LEED Neighborhood Development rating system that favors a more compact urban footprint; and, SHPO-administered grants (funded through the Historic Preservation Fund) to establish domestic performance benchmarks for home energy savings and audits.

### House and Senate Appropriations Mark Ups Scheduled for Next Week

House Appropriations Committee chairman David Obey (D-WI) provided an outline for finishing both the stimulus package and the remaining spending bills for fiscal 2009 by Feb. 13. He said he plans to mark up the spending part of the stimulus package on Jan. 21. The bill would come to the floor the following week. Obey said the House would consider the fiscal 2009 omnibus spending bill, which contains the nine remaining spending bills leftover from the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, the week of February 2<sup>nd</sup> while the full Senate considers its version of the economic recovery package. Senate Appropriations chairman Daniel Inouye (D-HI) said his panel will hold a markup of the stimulus bill on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and that he hopes to have a draft ready by January 23<sup>rd</sup> for bill review.

### Omnibus Lands Package Wins Easy Approval in Senate

#### Senate Passes Omnibus Lands Bill

The Senate passed the omnibus lands package (S. 22) on Thursday which includes the authorization bills for the Save America's Treasures (SAT), Preserve America, and the National Landscape Conservation System lands under the Bureau of Land Management. The measure passed easily on a 73-21 vote. The bill now goes over to the House where a vote is expected sometime in the next two weeks.

### Key Preservation Concerns and Questions Go Unanswered During Confirmation Hearings for Agriculture and Interior Cabinet Nominees

#### Confirmation Hearings Held for Agriculture and Interior Nominees

The Senate held confirmation hearings on Wednesday and Thursday this week for Agricultural Secretary nominee Tom Vilsack and Interior Secretary nominee Ken Salazar. Questions were submitted by the National Trust for both nominees and given to the Senate Agriculture Committee and the Energy Committee for vetting both candidates on a host of issues affecting the Forest Service, BLM, NPS, funding and public lands management in general.

Questions drafted for Agriculture-nominee Vilsack on the Forest Service centered on the \$31 million maintenance backlog facing the over 300,000 cultural resources sites under the agency's jurisdiction; his possible support for Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)-style program for addressing maintenance and stewardship issues of cultural sites on USFS lands; and the increasing budgetary resources being devoted by the agency to firefighting. Although the National Trust's questions were not asked directly, Vilsack did comment about the role of the Agriculture Department in federal forest management and said 'he'd like better management of forest and wildfire policy so that firefighting does not drain the budgets of other forest programs.'

Questions drafted for Interior-nominee Salazar focused on funding a comprehensive cultural resource survey in energy-intensive development areas and addressing the threat of growing recreational use — in particular, the use of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs); and a question on the growing imbalance between funding for cultural resources and natural resource programs for both stewardship and staffing needs. Once again, the committee panel did not use the questions submitted by the National Trust but other opportunities abound for using them in upcoming confirmation hearings for sub-cabinet posts.

