

7d

PUT ON ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD

DATE

Dear Senator/Congressman INSERT NAME:

INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME, representing INSERT BASIC/SHORT DESCRIPTION of ORGANIZATION, encourages an immediate, balanced solution to replace the Budget Control Act's required budget sequestration, which is set to start on January 2, 2012. We understand that difficult economic times require a re-examination of federal program success, effectiveness and funding levels, but we encourage you to continue to fund vital local and regional programs that provide economic opportunity, create jobs and make our communities safe. Sequestration's automatic, across-the-board cuts are blind to maintaining and supporting these programs that make our regions and communities economically viable.

We offers the following general recommendations for consideration as you examine sequestration and federal funding in general:

- Reforms to and consolidation of federal funding and programs should be looked to in order to save money and increase government efficiency, while decreasing the national debt.
- Domestic, discretionary programs, which are only 12 percent of the federal annual budget, are critical to the ability of local governments and regions to carry out their responsibilities as service providers for both the federal and state governments.
- State and local governments receive roughly 40 percent of all annual non-defense discretionary dollars (\$188 billion of \$500+ billion), covering dozens of program accounts from education to transportation. Discretionary spending is already set to drop by 10 percent over the next ten years and will plunge by 20 percent or more with sequestration.
- Due to economic challenges, local governments have experienced reduced revenue streams due to decreased taxes (primarily property and sales) and major reductions in state financial assistance, while at the same time facing an increased demand for services. As a result, local governments of all sizes and in all parts of the nation have been forced to institute significant layoffs, furloughs and service reductions, which could continue for several years to come.
- Federal assistance to state and local governments and regions will help mitigate further layoffs. Current unemployment rates are already at 8.3 percent nationally.
- Federal investment in state, local and regional infrastructure produces jobs and promotes local economic opportunities.
- Deficit reduction should not be accomplished by shifting costs to states and local governments, imposing unfunded mandates, or pre-empting local government programs or taxing authority.

Again, we encourage you to address sequestration immediately. Prolonging action leaves an uncertainty making it difficult for local governments and regions to appropriately plan and execute programs. We hope to partner with you to develop strong federal policies and strategic solutions that increase the effectiveness of federal dollars and showcase local and regional accomplishments. Please do not hesitate to contact me for more information at INSERT CONTACT INFO. Thank you.

Sincerely,