

December 17, 2008

Dear Colleagues,

The mission of Transportation Energy Partners (TEP) is to increase resources for Clean Cities coalitions by educating and building support from parties outside our community of coalitions, industry, and government partners. Energy Independence Days (EID) helps manifest this mission by educating Members of Congress, federal officials, and advanced transportation industry partners about the effective work of Clean Cities coalitions. Now, we'd like to introduce an organization, perhaps new to many coordinators, that we believe can be a valuable strategic partner for TEP and Clean Cities coalitions generally.

### **Climate Communities**

Climate Communities ([www.ClimateCommunities.us](http://www.ClimateCommunities.us)) is a national coalition of cities and counties that is educating federal policymakers about the essential role of local governments in addressing climate change and promoting a strong local-federal partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Thirty-eight local governments joined as founding members in the spring of 2008. Since then, Climate Communities has added many new members, including many members of ICLEI, with which Climate Communities has a strategic partnership. List of members and "endorsers" of their Climate Action Blueprint (further details below) are attached. Please take a look at these lists, which include some we know to be stakeholders in Clean Cities coalitions.

Climate Communities is governed by a 15-member Executive Committee of local elected officials. They are managed by The Ferguson Group, a Washington-based public affairs firm that specializes in representing local governments. Their Executive Director is Ken Brown. Some coordinators may recall that Ken attended and spoke at last year's Energy Independence Days event.

In late 2007, during their formative stage, Climate Communities reached out to us because they believed that Clean Cities coalitions offered valuable resources to their local government members to help develop and implement transportation-related climate projects. In short order they became more convinced that Clean Cities coalitions and the grant program needed much more funding.

Since forming in spring 2008, the coalition has achieved significant federal legislative successes. These include adding over \$300 billion for climate actions at the local level through the Lieberman-Warner climate cap and trade bill, and nearly \$300 million in funding approved by the House Energy and Water Subcommittee for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program.

Our favorable views about Climate Communities and their management team have formed over several months of observation and communication. On behalf of Climate Communities, Ken Brown invited several EID Planning Committee members to participate as observers in some meetings. Sam Spofforth of Clean Fuels Ohio attended a

formative meeting in December 2007 that included a group visit with Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA).

Al Christopher of Virginia Clean Cities has attended two functions as a non-dues paying observer. The Climate Leaders Retreat September 14-16 was a long series of preparatory conference calls, white papers and committee meetings that culminated in an impressive demonstration of the Ferguson Group's ability to organize, lead and focus policy development by a very divergent group of elected local officials. The Summit was hosted by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund at the historic Pocantico Conference Center on the Rockefeller Estate, testimony to Climate Communities and the Ferguson Group's capacity to attract the interest of powerful partners.

Like all policy development, climate action is about unending efforts to educate and steer resources. In that regard, the Climate Change Summit in Washington DC April 8-10 was equally impressive and instructive. Following a format very similar to EID, the Summit started with educational sessions and ended with visits by local government leaders to elected officials on Capitol Hill. The Summit was distinguished in two ways: the extraordinary level of access to powerful members of Congress (Boxer, Dingell, Lieberman, Visclosky and Warner) and a press conference orchestrated by the Ferguson Group during which the three powerful U.S senators behind the Lieberman-Warner cap and trade bill announced that they would amend the legislation to steer significant revenues to local governments so they could implement the carbon reduction provisions of the legislation.

### **Climate Communities and Clean Cities**

Most recently, Climate Communities and ICLEI, also represented by The Ferguson Group, have combined efforts to develop the Climate Action Blueprint, also attached here and on their web site. **The one-page Blueprint includes a succinct list of policy recommendations, including one to “provide \$400 million annually for the DOE Clean Cities program...”** Certainly, this recommendation is a testament to the quality of our collective work, and the esteem to which it is held by Climate Communities. Certainly we and the leadership of this coalition have common interests and a similar perspective at least regarding transportation energy strategies.

### **Nature of and Options for Partnership with Climate Communities**

Based on what we have observed and learned, the TEP Board and EID Planning Committee believe that Climate Communities and The Ferguson Group have tremendous value to offer to Clean Cities coalitions collectively. They are interested in working with us and we believe it makes sense, especially now, to work with them. Over these past two years we've organized Energy Independence Days, then assumed leadership of TEP this fall in part to become more visible collectively at the national level, engage in the federal policy process, and secure more resources for Clean Cities. By joining Climate Communities we build on these efforts by engaging and working with people with strong connections and proven savvy. Moreover, the timing couldn't be any better.

Memberships in Climate Communities range between \$2,500 and \$9,000 per year, depending on size of the community. Those with over 250,000 residents pay \$9,000. The TEP Board and Climate Communities staff have agreed that Clean Cities coalitions may partner with one or more local governments to provide funding for one or multiple memberships. Both the coalition and local community would enjoy member benefits through this arrangement. These include opportunities to participate in all Climate Communities policy activities and contact with policy-makers, connections with others in the coalition, visibility and positioning as a climate policy leader. More members mean that Climate Communities has more clout and more resources to produce results for local governments and coalitions.

If Clean Cities coalitions and local government partners across the country, working through TEP, can raise \$100,000, an additional benefit would be status as a major partner in the endeavor including a seat on the Executive Committee.

Many of us on the TEP Board and EID Planning Committee are planning to encourage our coalitions' Boards and local governments to consider joining Climate Communities. Ken Brown, their Executive Director, has expressed his willingness to help explain the organization, its agenda and activities to us and any of our stakeholders who are potentially interested. We will set up an initial conference call with Ken soon.

### **Our Challenge – and Duty**

We fully recognize the challenge presented by this partnership opportunity. It's outside of our collective experience. However, it is consistent with TEP's mission and goals, and the timing of this opportunity could not be better. We strongly believe it is worth pursuing. Let's come together to work for the betterment of Clean Cities and the individual and collective work we do throughout the country. We want to have an active dialogue around these ideas and welcome your questions and suggestions.

In closing it's worth noting that some of us have worked many years as Clean Cities coordinators while alternative fuels have been seen as a "niche" in our energy portfolio. Now this has changed completely. Certainly, changes present new opportunities.

But it's bigger than that. Our country and our world NEED US. Clean Cities coalitions have a duty to respond to this need – to help address the greatest (interconnected) challenges of this era – energy independence, global climate change and economic prosperity. Why is it our duty? Because we know we are capable of making a difference, but we can't achieve our full potential at our current level of resources. On our own we might be able to secure a bit more. But to secure substantially more we need to be known to and understood and appreciated by those in real positions of power. These leaders need to recognize what we and others recognize – that Clean Cities coalitions are indispensable to the effort to address these challenges and we must have the resources and tools to do so.

We look forward to hearing your questions and suggestions, then discussing how we might move forward on this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Sam Spofforth  
TEP Board Acting Chair

Francis Vogel  
TEP Board Acting Vice-Chair

Lee Grannis  
TEP Board Acting Treasurer

Chelsea Jenkins  
TEP Board Acting Secretary

Al Christopher  
TEP Board Member

Jonathan Overly  
TEP Board Member

Other TEP Board and EID Planning Committee members...