Report on
The Revitalizing Older
Cities Capitol Hill Summit

February 11-12, 2009

Executive Summary

Over 300 stakeholders from older industrial cities throughout the Northeast and Midwest region attended the Revitalizing Older Cities Capitol Hill Summit, including mayors, city officials, Members of Congress and their staff, academics, representatives and leaders of foundations, community-based organizations, public and private developers, and nonprofit organizations. They came to develop a federal agenda that would change federal policies that contribute to sprawl development and to encourage investment in and support for the nation's core cities and towns.

During the two days, Summit participants concurred that:

- Federal policies have had a significant impact on the economy of older cities. Years of disinvestment, neglect, and policies that promote decentralized development must be changed if these cities are to realize their potential.

- While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides badly needed funding to address critical needs, much more needs to be done to ensure that the federal government becomes an active and supportive partner in revitalizing core cities and towns.

- A broad-based metropolitan agenda, while critical, needs to recognize and provide for the particular needs of these struggling cities. One size does not fit all, and the particular policies the federal government enacts will greatly impact the economic future of older industrial cities and towns.

- The future of the economy and the environment rests on the ability of the federal government to creatively build on the assets and opportunities of core cities and towns. These communities have developed many innovative and successful programs that the federal government can build on and take to scale in ways that could rebuild the nation's faltering economy, while reducing carbon emissions and dependence on fossil fuels.

Summit participants began building a federal agenda to accomplish the transition to a federal government that drives a sustainable, equitable recovery.

The discussions during the two days alternated between community leaders who shared their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities for success with policymakers, explaining how legislative initiatives can change current federal policies to give communities the tools and support they need. Rather than summarize every individual's remarks, this report provides a summary of major points: what works on the ground, followed by a consideration of federal initiatives that would support and build on those successful efforts. The six sessions covered transportation, housing, water infrastructure, vacant properties, economic and workforce development, and green jobs and sustainable cities.

To set the stage for the discussions, Jennifer Vey of the Brookings Institution noted that in order to address the challenges facing older industrial cities, we need to leverage key assets: innovation, infrastructure, human capital, and quality places. Cities can't go it alone to overcome infrastructure deficits and neighborhood impacts of foreclosures, curb sprawling development patterns, and reduce carbon footprints. Older industrial cities need a new federal agenda for change.

The federal government should provide leadership, vision, and education, at the same time it empowers local decision-making and flexibility. Cluster initiatives, for example, shouldn't be decided at the federal level, but should look to the regions to build on their strengths. They should look to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to link land use, transportation investments, and housing decisions. The federal government needs to maximize performance, promote cooperation among agencies, and provide better analysis and data collection. The Community Development Block Grant Program will continue to be municipalities' lifeline.

Transportation

Transportation is the second highest cost for families after housing. Congress will authorize the surface transportation program and aviation program either this year or next. These authorizations will have huge implications for revitalizing cities. Several priorities must be established:

- Increase investment in infrastructure that builds a vision of a new national structure;
- Empower local decision-makers to make better decisions—establish a sustainability challenge grant or metropolitan mobility structure; and
- Provide maintenance and address preservation needs, as well as new investment.

How do we link land use, housing, and transportation?

Otis Rolley, III, President and CEO of the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance, discussed the challenge of revitalization based on transportation options. In the early 20th century, Baltimore and the five counties surrounding Baltimore had a phenomenal trolley system, which helped pull the region together by providing public transportation for all segments of the city. In 1950, the city had a million residents, however, the decades that followed resulted in a decline in population and the destruction of the trolley system. Federal and state policies encouraged investment in roads and disinvestment in mass transit. Jobs shifted from manufacturing to services. Distrust built up as many moved out of the city.

When transit lines were built late in the 20th century, they actually created disconnection within the Baltimore regional area, separating the poorer and minority-concentrated communities from the wealthier suburbs and city communities. Further efforts to connect highways in at least one case actually exacerbated tensions between Baltimore communities. For example, a road was built that hurt minority communities in Baltimore, creating ill will toward DOT and the Baltimore government, and failing to connect two major highways.

Officials are now working on an east-west connection called the red line, in partnership with the city and state to translate transportation options into economic development and access to opportunities. The Alliance is working on what it characterizes as a regional, rapid, and reliable approach that equates economic growth, equitable access, and environmental protection. The red line is going to connect two existing transit lines. A regional solution is needed — a connection between the city and its suburbs.

A similar challenge exists in Newark, New Jersey. A recent transportation study determined that there were 40,000 jobs concentrated in the port/airport area. Residents in Newark, however, have only 8,000 of those jobs. The interstate highway actually cuts off many Newark residents from these jobs. The study looked at ways to connect residents to these jobs, encourage infill development, and try a pilot project for bus express service.

Transportation decisions are central to our ability to deal with many challenges: rapid population growth and demographic change, globalization, climate change, changing spatial development patterns, and the emergence of mega-regions. Policymakers need to visualize a national transportation system and strategy that includes a real freight policy to alleviate port congestion and "green" the ports. Fashioning a strategic mobility system makes more sense than formula funding. A metropolitan mobility plan needs to award competitive grant projects that reflect regional governance. We need a new transit-oriented development initiative as well.

Jackie Schmitz, Legislative Assistant, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure noted that we have come a long way at focusing attention on the need for funding for infrastructure, as evidenced in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Chairman Oberstar fought to include money that goes directly to local governments and cities, as well as for bicycles and other alternative modes.

This ARRA bill is the way to clear out the maintenance back log. Then we can move to authorization where we can look to the new priorities and new programs. The time frame is to get a bill passed in House in May so that we can get a bill finalized by the end of September. Many challenges face our nation. Unfortunately we have high congestion costs, after 17 years we see $156 billion increase in logistic costs for companies. Nations around the world are investing more than U.S. The recent commission report pointed out we need $225-340 billion investment in coming years, compared to $85 billion we are currently investing. The committee wants to start anew with this bill. Everyone has been fighting over too small an investment. On one hand we have those who want to continue the traditional federal role of funding highways; others want to take on additional consideration over impact on environment, public health and greater accountability. Need a more integrated, broader base approach that measures what we get for our investment. We will start with a programmatic structure first then take up financing issues. We will start with gas tax and then consider other additional approaches; including a vehicle miles traveled structure.

Recommendations for federal transportation policy include:

- Create a national infrastructure plan for goods and passenger movement.
- Emphasize metropolitan mobility to focus on land use and transportation coordination.
- Align incentives with national goals (such as economic productivity, job access, climate, and energy independence) to benefit cities.
- Develop new programs, such as transit-oriented development.

Housing

Chris Walker, of the Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC), reported that metro counties alone had 1.7 million first mortgage home purchase loans outstanding in foreclosure. March to December 2008 saw a 27 percent increase in foreclosures. In that same period, REO properties (*Real Estate Owned* properties that go back to the mortgage company after an unsuccessful foreclosure auction) increased 20 percent. Although communities in Florida and California are most often the subject of media reports, of the top 20 to 30 counties, ranked by number of foreclosures, 11 of those are in Northeast and Midwest. Cook County is highly impacted and is third behind Los Angeles and Miami-Dade. Cook County REO properties increased by 44 percent. Most of these are vacant properties that are about three times as likely to affect property values as foreclosed properties. Suffolk County, New York, had a 38 percent increase in REO properties, Philadelphia County's increase was 25 percent, and Allegheny County around Pittsburgh had a 38 percent increase.

Daryl Rush, Director of Community Development for the City of Cleveland, explained that the way his city has put together tools to deal with the crisis is unique. The city has borrowed what works from other cities, and relied on the significant infrastructure that fosters collaboration on strategies for dealing with vacant structures and improving neighborhood housing stock. Last year, Cleveland put 160 people in the field to identify vacant or distressed structures that eventually totaled 8,009, about 25 percent of its stock. The goal is to create healthy communities by strengthening the attractiveness of the neighborhood. This requires looking comprehensively to rehabilitation and the state of infrastructure. The city must retain residents in Cleveland neighborhoods and manage or reverse the decline in property values. In order to do so, the city updated its city-wide plan. With a renewed focus on rehabilitation, the city also increased the volume of demolition from 200 to 1,100 homes in 2008, and tried to increase the pool of buyers and funding. This has been difficult because in the past five years, HUD funding fell 28 percent.

Cleveland's housing strategies include investment that is focused on model blocks and an approach that coordinates economic development and planning. Neighborhood-based organizations are very important in this process, as is greater coordination with state government, counties, and first-ring suburbs. The city's housing strategies include a wide range of programs for the renovation of abandoned structures:

Housing Trust Fund leverages five dollars for every dollar of city money. Since 2006, $11 million has been invested in the renovation of 927 housing units and construction of 956 units. Awards in 2008 totaled $5.4 million for 10 projects and 668 housing units that now meet a "green" standard certification.

Affordable Scattered Site Housing awards grants to nonprofits to develop housing, mainly one-to-two-family homes for low-income families. $1.3 million was awarded in 2008 to the Cleveland Housing Network to rehab 49 vacant houses and construct three homes to ADA standards. Low-Income Housing Tax Credits have been allocated to this project to help keep the rents affordable.

Model Blocks Program focuses on revitalization by Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in 19 model blocks—three-to-four-block areas consisting of about 100 homes. The program renovates vacant homes, completes anchor projects, demolishes distressed structures, and assembles lots for future development. This creates an impact that can serve to stimulate further revitalization. $1.6 million has been awarded to support Model Block improvements.

Opportunity Housing is a new pilot program that reclaims foreclosed properties within designated neighborhoods to restore market confidence, eliminate blight, and preserve property values. The initiative will invest $8 million in the first year of the three-year program to impact 250 homes and respond on three levels: mitigation will keep 100 families at risk of losing their homes from going through foreclosure; demolition of 100 vacant and blighted structures per year will complement efforts to gain control of lots for future development; and redevelopment of 50 vacant structures per year through immediate sale or short-term lease-purchase/rental arrangement will target buyers between 60 to 120 percent of the area medium Income.

Afford-A-Home provides deferred second mortgage loans to help homebuyers purchase and renovate one-to-two-family properties. These houses must be vacant and in need of extensive repair. The repair cost must total at least $25,000 for a single-family home and $30,000 for a two-family home. The program will average about 100 home buyers each year.

Home repair assistance for existing homeowners: Assistance includes a number of programs, including Repair-a-Home, Senior Housing Assistance Program, Heritage Home Program of Cleveland Restoration Society, and Cleveland Action to Support Housing, which supports a rehab approach.

Home buyer counseling and foreclosure prevention: This program includes Homeownership Counseling, Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program, Financial Literacy Coalition, Foreclosure Prevention Counseling, and an Anti-Predatory Lending Second Mortgage Program.

*Nuisance abatement***:** The demolition and maintenance of vacant properties and increased acquisition of parcels for the land bank helps to meet the demand for the city to demolish houses. Cleveland spent $9 million for demolition in 2008.

Land assembly and planning for reuse: Greater Circle Living is a new program that offers home buyers incentives to live near their workplace in the University Circle area. It provides a forgivable loan of $10,000, as well as a forgivable loan of $5,000 to families with a household income of under $150,000 employed in any Greater University Circle area nonprofit organization. It also provides up to $4,000 in matching funds for eligible exterior improvements for employees who own homes.

Securing control over vacant properties: Accelerated foreclosure of tax delinquent properties cuts the process from two years to four months. The city soon will be able to have a county-wide land bank that can hold properties with structures on them.

Barbara W. Burnham pointed out that in 18 out of 25 offices, the Local Incentives Support Coalition (LISC) focuses on local programs across the country. One tool that is being rolled out is the National Community Stabilization Trust that will be a holding entity and an access point for REO properties. The advocacy framework around the National Stabilization Program (NSP) resulted from experience gained in the last real estate crisis. Communities lost hundreds of properties because there was no access to REO properties or working capital. A major problem with first round of NSP was a lack of access for nonprofits. The NSP in the stimulus package is a competitive program and provides access for nonprofits. Strategy, collaboration, focus, and leverage are incredibly important for dealing with the foreclosure problem. Two-thirds of the NSP money will go for demolition in Cleveland, and will produce a positive impact in these neighborhoods.

Gail Laster, Professional Staff Member of the House Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, noted that the Financial Services Committee has a full agenda for the coming year, turning its attention to foreclosure mitigation "cram down" legislation and a bankruptcy bill. Bankruptcy legislation through the House Judiciary Committee may be combined with provisions for helping borrowers in trouble. The focus of the "cram down" legislation is to get lenders and servicers to work out ways to deal with foreclosure. The committee will take the lead from the administration and its housing plan. The committee Chairman's initiative during this Congress is a preservation bill that will cover rural as well as urban communities. This massive legislation will be reduced since the new administration will take many actions administratively.

The committee will also pursue legislation to help disabled and public housing reform. It plans to revamp the Section 8 program and establish an affordable housing trust funded by Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs, such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and 12 Federal Home Loan banks), which own many low-income tax credits.

Water Infrastructure

Kevin Shafer, Executive Director of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), spoke about the importance of addressing the aging water infrastructure in older cities. The MMSD provides wastewater treatment and flood management to over a million customers in 28 communities covering 400 square miles. The two water reclamation facilities receive wastewater from 300 miles of MMSD sewer, 3,000 miles of community sewers, and another 3,000 miles of private property sewers. The MMSD has a deep tunnel system that is 300 feet below ground, runs 19 miles, and is 17 to 32 feet in diameter. The construction of this deep tunnel (the first in 1993) has dramatically cut the overflow volumes. The tunnel needed to be expanded from 405 million gallons to 521 million gallons by adding two segments: a segment to handle 89 million gallons, built in 2006, and another to handle 27 million gallons in 2010.

The estimated pollutant reduction over a 25-year period is about 50 percent, and the cost of the tunnel is an estimated $4 billion. In 1975, the combined sewer overflows contributed 49 percent, and sewer system overflows 2 percent, of fecal coliform loadings. By 2000, CSOs contributed only 7 percent, SSOs 3 percent, and urban non-agricultural runoff 68 percent. An additional investment of $7 billion will reduce the agricultural contribution to 0 percent. Attention is now focused on reducing urban non-agricultural runoff, as well as runoff from downspout disconnections, rain barrels, rain gardens and bio-retention, green roofs and roof storage, pervious pavements, and green parking lots—all of which will continue to result in beach improvements.

These efforts have helped spark a revitalization of Milwaukee. A nearby beach has become popular once again now that pollutants have been dramatically reduced. People can fish from the river running through Milwaukee, which has helped revitalize districts along the river.

The costs of fixing the combined sewer overflow problems in older communities can overwhelm their ability to raise the money. A sustained source of target financing should be created by the federal government to address the magnitude of the problem. Unless this investment in water infrastructure is made, water pollution levels will return to those not seen since the 1970s. Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) is working on legislation to create a Water Infrastructure Trust Fund.

Vacant Properties and Brownfields

Joseph Schilling of the National Vacant Properties Coalition noted that many cities in the nation have had substantial and sustained decreases in population. These decreases are often accompanied by dysfunctional job, land, and housing markets and a surplus of vacant and abandoned properties and buildings. Demand-side economic development policies are not enough to turn these cities around. The foreclosure crisis has dramatically added to the problem. A number of barriers impede effective vacant property management:

- Local jurisdictions often lack legal authority;
- Local governments, CDCs, and civic organizations lack the capacity to deal with the volume of properties;
- Government fragmentation contributes to a lack of collaboration; and
- There is an absence of a federal urban agenda and resources.

This argues for a living laboratory model that could encourage regional frameworks for correct sizing; collaborative partnerships across government, nonprofit, and business sectors; and a way to test policy innovations through coordinated revitalization resources, performance-based regulatory standards, and revitalization authorities, land banks, and urban land trusts.

Dan Kildee, Genesee County Treasurer and Chairman of the Genesee Land Bank, explained how a land bank, which is a public authority, can acquire, hold, manage, and develop foreclosed property as well as other vacant and abandoned properties. It can help a city gain control of its landscape to reshape the urban form. Formerly, foreclosure was a four-to-seven-year process that often resulted in:

- No clear title;
- Hundreds of owners;
- Low-end speculation;
- Indiscriminate foreclosure putting homeowners at risk; and
- Contagious blight.

In Flint, Michigan, a law passed in 1999 created a one-to-two-year process that resulted in:

- Clear title judgment;
- Property titled to the county;
- Tax liens eliminated;
- Hardship postponements; and

- Intervention.

Since 2003, the Genesee County Land Bank has:

- Transferred 7,400 properties to the Land Bank Authority (LBA) (12 percent of Flint);
- Resulted in 2,350 foreclosure prevention cases;
- Demolished 1,000 abandoned houses;
- Maintained 2,300 sites and cleared them of debris;
- Removed 1,000 tons of debris since the summer of 2004;
- Listed 800 properties in the "Clean and Green" program;
- Started construction of 208 new units of housing built and 134 under construction; and
- Launched $36.1 million in new development underway.

As a result, a study by Michigan State University concluded that the impact of intervention on surrounding property values was significant. A total of 26,000 properties were affected by the $3.5 million invested in demolition and cleanup, resulting in $112 million in increased private value.

The "Community Regeneration, Sustainability, and Innovation Act of 2009" would encourage and test innovative vacant property reclamation and urban infrastructure renewal strategies in older industrial cities and metro areas with a history of severe population and job loss.

Economic and Workforce Development

Howard Wial, Fellow at the Brookings Institution, summarized Brookings' recommendations for encouraging innovation. Brookings argues for federal programs that coordinate or collaborate with efforts by state or local governments. Currently, the federal government invests less than many other countries in innovation. Brookings recommends establishing a National Innovation Foundation to fund national sector research grants, offer state Innovation-Based Economic Development partnership grants, administer grants to regional industry clusters, and champion innovation policies. Brookings also calls for federal efforts to encourage cluster development through CLUSTER grants and an information center to spur more cluster initiatives.

Rob Simpson, President of the Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Central New York (MDA), explained that MDA has over 200 chief executives of the region's most prominent companies and institutions focused on business development. He argued that federal investment in research and development should be a national imperative. In central New York, total per capita academic R&D spending in the Syracuse MSA is nearly eight percent higher than the national average. However, there is a commercialization conundrum in central upstate New York. The area has half the amount of industrial R&D funding of the national average. It has 30 percent fewer patents per thousand residents. It lags in university spin outs, and its average per capita venture capital is 84 percent below the average ($86 vs. $541).

MDA completed an independent sector validation that found 419 companies with 10,290 employees with competitive strengths in indoor environmental quality, renewable energy, green materials, and water quality and resources. It created "The Green Team," a multi-stakeholder group of public, private, academic, and economic development partners to promote central New York green-tech assets.

MDA provides matching grant program for university-industry partnerships that develop new R&D relationships. It has awarded 28 grants of $1.4 million, and leveraged corporate investments of $2.9 million with $11 million in follow-on funding. This has a potential for creating 380 new jobs and $95 million in new revenues. MDA calls for a national innovation policy that:

- Makes radical new investments in basic research and commercialization;
- expands the federal R&D tax credit;
- Supports regional sector validation and cluster initiatives (WIRED grants);
- Aligns K-12 and higher education support with needs of innovation industries;
- Reforms immigration policies to attract the best and brightest people in science and engineering; and
- Ensures adequate supply of seed and venture capital through direct investment or tax credits.

Green Jobs and Sustainable Cities

The creation of green jobs as an economic driver for cities is critical. The challenge is to focus green job creation by ensuring green buildings and encouraging infill redevelopment in cities that results in a double benefit of residential and transportation energy reductions. Mark Alan Hughes, Director of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability of the City of Philadelphia, referred to the challenges of Philadelphia as the tale of two cities: one prosperous with the strengths of the education and medical services population, and the other characterized by population and job loss. The sustainability initiative is organized around trying to turn around this depreciation in value. It is designed to create a competitive advantage in which urban life looks better than suburban living. The organizational challenge is to capitalize on the advantages inherent in having 400,000 row houses which represent a least cost source for capturing energy efficiency attached to building stock. Green jobs can mean hiring auditors, insulators, and monitors. It includes those who manufacture materials, as well as those in the arts and engineering schools who address design issues. He is also looking at ways to capitalize on other funding mechanisms such as decoupling electricity rates.

Federal help is required to help take the effort already underway to scale. Making energy efficiency investments and training people for these new jobs requires organization and coordination with many different organizations. Philadelphia is engaging unions, schools, community colleges, and other traditional job training providers to help. In order to capture these opportunities, the city and the federal government must create demand for energy efficiency measures in every way possible.

Danielle Baussan, Majority Counsel of the House Select Committee on Energy and Global Warming, noted that the Select Committee was reauthorized for the 111th Congress and that Chairman Ed Markey (D-MA) is also Chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment for the Energy and Commerce Committee. Sustainability is dependent on using resources at a rate that can be replenished, and cities are the Saudi Arabia of energy efficiency. What is needed is to build on existing workforce and manufacturing capabilities. The Committee is planning to have a climate bill considered in the Energy and Commerce Committee by Memorial Day.

There is substantial funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to begin the energy transformation. The key will be implementation, and the challenge is to determine what works best under various circumstances. There are also substantial training dollars in the workforce investment system. Several things need to be done, including training many more people to do auditing for energy efficiency, building capacity in CDCs to reach out to neighborhoods, retooling dislocated workers, and engaging trades around these opportunities. Different training programs are needed for dislocated workers, youths, and former inmates.

The Committee is looking carefully at cap–and-trade systems for carbon emissions. Carbon needs to be monetized. In a cap-and-trade system, the amount of carbon that is being traded must be measured and the carbon reduction verified. The amount will go up in value over a period of several years. Conservation is the commodity and is the least-cost source of that commodity [needs clarification]. Utilities will have to reduce peak demand by 1 percent in approximately 2011; 3 percent in 2015; and 4.5 percent in 2015.

The following summarizes key elements of the Revitalizing Older Cities Legislative Agenda and highlights legislative initiatives, many of which have been introduced and/or supported by members of the ROC Task Force.

Revitalizing Older Cities Agenda

Older industrial cities and towns are among the hardest hit in the current recession due to years of disinvestment and neglect. Although the stimulus package finances many programs that will help cities and towns recover, by its very nature it has not made the many changes in federal policy that are necessary to rebuild the nation's economy around sustainable goals. The agenda for revitalization includes:

Transportation

H.R. 5951/S. 2686, Safe and Complete Streets Act of 2008, was a bill introduced last year by Representative Doris Matsui (D-CA) and Senator Harkin (D-IA) that would ensure that all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users—including children, older individuals, and individuals with disabilities—are able to travel safely and conveniently on streets and highways. The legislation encourages the use of non-motorized transportation modes, a key factor in creating healthier, more livable cities.

Housing

Support is needed for additional federal action to stop foreclosures and to give more resources directly to cities, particularly the cities and towns struggling with foreclosures and abandoned properties prior to the most recent wave of foreclosures.

H.R. 1043/S. 584 was introduced last year by the late Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH) and Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR). Enhancing the historic rehabilitation tax credit provisions make them work better with the low-income tax credit and will foster the use of older buildings for affordable housing. This bill will create an incentive for the redevelopment our cities' architectural treasures and stimulate housing options for less fortunate families at the same time.

H.R. 2075 and S. 1239. Introduced last year by Representative Richard Neal (D-MA) and Senator John Rockefeller IV (D-WV) would extend the New Markets Tax Credit. This tax incentive has been a successful mechanism in channeling investment dollars to neighborhoods most in need. Past projects that utilized New Markets Tax Credit funding have provided housing choices, stimulated local economies, and significantly reinvigorated challenged communities. H.R. 2075 and S. 1239 would reauthorize the program until 2013.

Water Infrastructure

In order to meet the water infrastructure needs of our nation, Congressman Blumenauer is proposing draft legislation to create a Water Trust Fund. The mission of this trust fund is to provide a deficit-neutral, consistent, and fire-walled source of revenue to states to support the replacement, repair, and rehabilitation of clean and drinking water infrastructure. The overall federal government contribution to total clean water spending has shrunk from 78 percent in 1978 to 3 percent today. The GAO, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Water Infrastructure Network have estimated that the nation faces a growing water infrastructure funding gap of from $300 to $500 billion between what is currently being spent and what must be spent over the next 20 years in order to upgrade our aging water infrastructure.

Vacant Properties and Brownfields

The Community Regeneration, Sustainability, and Innovation Act of 2009, H.R. 932/S. 453, would encourage and test innovative vacant property reclamation and urban infrastructure renewal strategies in older industrial cities and metropolitan areas with a history of severe population and job loss. This bill would address blight and decay caused by abundant brownfields and vacant properties, and provide tools for new strategies.

H.R. 3080 would create a new tax credit to assist states and local governments clean up contaminated industrial lands that pose threats to public health and the local economy. Even with state incentives designed to encourage the redevelopment of brownfields, thousands of acres of brownfields remain idle. Federal incentives to bring private dollars to these problem areas would be a significant step toward putting these brownfields back into safe and productive reuse.

Economic and Workforce Development

S. 3078, the National Innovation and Job Creation Act of 2008, introduced in the last Congress by Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), establishes in the Executive Office of the President a National Innovation Council, to be responsible for formulating and advocating for the federal government's innovation policy. It requires the Council to collaborate with major statistical agencies, collect data concerning the impact on productivity of the Council's programs, and annually report to Congress on national innovation and productivity. It places the Council under the direction of a National Innovation Council Board.

Green Jobs and Sustainable Cities

Introduced by Representative Ed Perlmutter (D-CO) last year, H.R. 6078, the Green Resources for Energy Efficient Neighborhoods Act of 2008 or the GREEN Act of 2008, sets provisions concerning federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) energy efficiency and conservation standards and green building standards for structures. It requires the Secretary of HUD to conduct a program to demonstrate the effectiveness of funding a portion of the costs of carrying out energy efficiency, conservation, and

green building measures for multi-family housing projects for which rental assistance is provided under a covered multi-family assistance program. It amends the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 to provide for credits for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac for mortgage purchases that support housing that meets conservation standards. It also amends the Federal National Mortgage Association Charter Act, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation Act, and the Federal Home Loan Bank Act to include provisions concerning energy-efficient mortgages and location-efficient mortgages.