



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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March 20, 2009

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Vice President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Vice President:

On behalf of the Nation's mayors, I want to thank you for your leadership in guiding the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). As we stated to President Obama and you in the White House on February 20, we are totally committed to working with your Administration to make sure that we use these critically needed resources to save or create 3.5 million jobs, and invest in projects that are transparent, maximize innovation, and provide lasting environmental and infrastructure benefits.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors fully understands that the ARRA contains very specific limitations on the use of economic recovery funding. We understand from this Act – and from the direction that you are giving to implement the Act – the Administration will not approve funding requests for swimming pools, water parks, golf courses, mini-golf or disc golf courses, zoos or aquariums, dog parks, skateboard parks, or other similar projects. Our organization is committed to helping educate our members regarding your approach and the limitations on ARRA funding.

Per your letter of March 19, we also understand that you need our continued assistance in getting the word out to our members about the types of projects that federal agencies will determine should and should not be funded under ARRA – beyond Section 1604 of the law. We have been and will continue to work closely with the federal agencies administering the direct-city programs under ARRA to help inform our mayors on any and all guidance provided by the White House and the federal agencies. We know that the standards for what can and cannot be funded by the ARRA are high, and we pledge our organization's continued assistance to make sure we help our members uphold the letter and spirit of this law.

In our discussions with the White House and formal meetings with the federal agencies (particularly the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Justice), we have requested clear guidance on the categories of projects that can be funded under

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CEO and Executive Director:
TOM COCHRAN

ARRA. We have been and will continue to work closely with these Cabinet agencies as they administer the direct-city programs under ARRA to help inform our mayors on any and all guidance provided by the White House and these agencies.

As I mentioned to you in Miami during your recent visit, under my direction the Conference of Mayors has launched a new website (usmayors.org/recovery) that is totally dedicated to ARRA implementation. Through this tool, we are providing detailed information to our members on: 1) Funding and Deadlines; 2) News from Cities and Best Practices; and 3) Obstacles for Cities. This tool is available to you and the entire Administration to help inform mayors of any issue related to ARRA.

In addition, per the request of the White House, we have surveyed our members and have collected the names of 321 city coordinators or “czars” who stand ready to work with the Administration on ARRA implementation. We look forward to future work with the Administration as well as the regional meetings that are being planned by the federal agencies on ARRA.

Mr. Vice President, your continued leadership and support of the Nation’s mayors and our cities are greatly appreciated. You have long been our champion, and we will continue to be your partner in making sure that goals and objectives of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act are fully realized for the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Manuel A. Diaz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Manuel A. (Manny) Diaz
Mayor of Miami
President