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COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE

January 22, 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol, S-131 113
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, and Chairman Feinstein:

As we consider both economic recovery legislation and appropriations bills, we have a tremendous opportunity to assist states and local governments and stimulate our national economy by creating jobs. I respectfully request that funding to support the Diesel Emission Reduction Act ("DERA") be included in the economic recovery package.

As authorized in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers a competitively awarded grant program for state and local governments' efforts to achieve significant reductions in diesel emissions in terms of tons of pollution produced and diesel emission exposure. This provision also requires the EPA to award grants for the benefit of public fleets.

It is my understanding that the EPA has a backlog of eligible projects that would benefit from an investment in DERA. Based on a study supported by the DERA Coalition, an organization that includes both environmental groups and industry, an appropriation of $550 million and its associated matching funds will generate more than $3 billion in additional economic output and save or create over 19,000 jobs.

This proposed increase in funding for DERA would also contribute to a cleaner environment. Clean diesel retrofits of existing vehicles can reduce cancer-causing particulate matter emissions by over 90% and additional health benefits can be obtained.

At present this initiative is supported by a large coalition of groups from the environmental and health communities and industry. This investment in cleaning our air will have long-term positive benefits to our economy and our environment. I urge you to support additional funding for this program as a part of the economic recovery package.

Sincerely,

Russell D. Feingold

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