



# CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

CITY COUNCILLOR LELAND CHEUNG

March 03, 2014

Donna P. Lopez  
City Clerk  
City Hall  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Ms. Lopez:

Please place the enclosed letter on Communications and Reports from City Officers.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leland Cheung".

Leland Cheung

### **Cities Call for More Federal Partnership to Drive Innovation and Opportunity**

**Washington, D.C.** – The National League of Cities (NLC) today called on Congress and the Administration to prioritize investments in cities and their residents that encourage and take advantage of the innovation happening on the local level to drive economic growth. NLC's federal action agenda reflects the need for a new federal-local partnership to facilitate investment in our infrastructure and workforce.

Cities have shown true leadership by continuing to fund projects and keep priorities moving despite the political turmoil in Washington. We work with our civic partners – notably businesses, nonprofits and schools – to drive local growth agendas that create jobs and lift up all sectors and people of our cities.

The agenda emphasizes the connected nature of federal action and local economic efforts and helps cities drive forward an agenda that will empower people and businesses to make investments and see innovation explode in cities.

"Advancing this agenda will push economic opportunity into all corners of our cities," said NLC President Chris Coleman, Mayor of Saint Paul, Minn. "These federal actions will provide economic stability to residents of cities across the nation and provide a foundation for a generation of growth."

With input from NLC's membership, NLC's leadership selected this federal agenda to guide NLC's advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill and with the Administration.

The National League of Cities (NLC) is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans.

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### **Cities' Top Federal Action Priorities in 2014**

#### **Support Marketplace Fairness**

NLC calls on Congress to pass the Marketplace Fairness Act to place brick-and-mortar community businesses on a level playing field with online retailers and afford consumers more choice through fair competition. Allowing local governments the flexibility to collect the taxes already owed to them on remote online purchases removes an unfair disadvantage for local businesses, while helping cities close budget gaps. Collecting owed sales taxes means more money for basic services, such as roads and police officers, without increasing the overall federal deficit.

#### **Invest in Local Transportation Priorities**

NLC urges Congress to authorize a new, long-term federal surface transportation program that recognizes the central role of transportation to metropolitan and regional economies and includes local voices in planning and project selection. With a strong federal partnership, cities can continue transportation and infrastructure investments that ensure everyone in our communities has access to education, training and employment. The program must provide cities a greater role in decision-making for transportation projects to meet community goals and recognize the role of metropolitan economies to the nation's economic wellbeing and competitiveness. The overall transportation system must be made



more efficient, including upgrades to older systems and the addition of new modes like light rail and bus rapid transit.

### **Protect Municipal Bonds**

NLC opposes any attempt to eliminate or limit the traditional tax exemption for municipal bonds, whether as a part of a deficit reduction plan, a push for comprehensive tax reform or as an offset for new spending. As the Administration and Congress look for revenue to reduce the deficit and still fund programs, the federal income tax exemption provided to interest paid on state and municipal bonds (debt) is under threat. In addition to increasing taxes, the federal government can raise revenue by expanding what is subject to being taxed (broadening the base); as an alternative to raising taxes, interest paid on bonds issued by local governments currently not taxed could lose their exemption from taxation.

### **Fix the Nation's Broken Immigration System**

NLC calls on Congress and the Administration to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill that will fix the nation's broken immigration system that hurts families, communities and our economy. For far too long, our immigration system has torn apart families, allowed cultural misunderstandings to threaten our communities and held back economic growth by keeping a substantial population from being able to fully participate. Cities need a plan for comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship, strong border enforcement and support for cities and towns to integrate immigrants into their communities and allow them to make both cultural and economic contributions to the nation.

### **Strengthen the Nation's Education Pipeline**

NLC seeks to partner with the Department of Education to strengthen the education pipeline from early childhood opportunities through improved postsecondary success. That means increasing the visibility, understanding and appreciation of the role that cities can play in leading educational change by advancing strong early childhood opportunities, citywide high-quality afterschool programs and strategies to improve postsecondary success rates. NLC needs Congress to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which includes important education programs such as Title I, so that states and localities will have the tools they need to improve their local education systems. A strong federal-local partnership will acknowledge that the best education decisions are made at the local level, and will leverage the expertise of the federal government.

### **Support Community Resilience**

As extreme weather events become more common, local governments in all geographic and climatic regions are looking for resources to assist them in anticipating, preparing for and adapting to these events. NLC urges Congress and the Administration to help local governments conduct vulnerability assessments, and develop and implement adaptation and resilience action plans. This includes passing the STRONG Act (Strengthening the Resiliency of our Nation on the Ground). Cities need stronger federal support to leverage resources most effectively, learn from and act on the latest information available on climate change and find ways to partner with regional and state agencies that encourage smart planning.

