



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rebecca M. (Becky) Sullivan
Communications Director
Reconnecting America
1707 L Street, N.W., Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20036
(w) 202-429-6990, ext. 206
(f) 202-315-3508
(c) 202-412-5573

bsullivan@reconnectingamerica.org

(April 17, 2012) In response to the Senate Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee vote, Reconnecting America President and CEO John Robert Smith issued the following statement:

I commend the action taken today by the Senate Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee to pass a bipartisan bill that will fund critical housing and transportation programs. The investments called for in this bill in our transit, rail, and road networks and in neighborhoods and communities across the country will strengthen America's economic outlook and improve the daily lives of millions of families.

Of particular importance is the funding provided for the HUD Sustainable Communities grants. This funding will support integrated regional and local planning for housing, transportation, and other infrastructure in urban and rural areas around the country. In fiscal years 2010 and 2011, 152 communities and regions in 48 states received grants from this program, and are now hard at work developing strategies, implementing plans, and leveraging funds to create strong local economies. The need for these programs is significant; in those two fiscal years HUD received applications totaling \$2.2 billion for regional planning and community challenge grants (jointly funded by DOT), which far exceeded available program funds. The \$50 million provided in this bill will not meet every need, but will help to continue the progress that HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities has made. I look forward to working with Congress to ensure that this funding is maintained in the final Transportation-HUD appropriations legislation.

I am also extremely pleased to see continued focus on improving and expanding America's transit and rail systems, particularly through the New Starts and TIGER programs and the High-Performance Rail funds. This will provide Americans choices in how they travel.

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(Photos of John Robert Smith are available [here](#) and [here](#))

About Reconnecting America

Reconnecting America is a national nonprofit that is helping to transform promising ideas into thriving communities - where transportation choices make it easy to get

from place to place, where businesses flourish, and where people from all walks of life can afford to live, work and visit. Reconnecting America is the managing partner of the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, the only national nonprofit effort funded by Congress to promote best practices in transit-oriented development. Reconnecting America is also a founding partner of Transportation for America, a broad coalition of housing, environmental, equal opportunity, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21st century national transportation program. For more information visit our website, www.reconnectingamerica.org.