California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley

Establishment of San Joaquin Valley as "Sustainable Community"
Through Federal Interagency Initiative

We ask for support to establish the San Joaquin Valley as a demonstration region for the implementation of HUD/EPA/DOT/DOE's Sustainable Communities Initiative. Among their proposed activities, this interagency partnership "will seek to integrate housing, transportation, water infrastructure, and land use planning and investment. HUD, EPA and DOT propose to make planning grants available to metropolitan areas, and create mechanisms to ensure those plans are carried through to localities." Upon his visit to the Valley in August 2009, Deputy Secretary Ron Sims indicated that the San Joaquin Valley's interest in becoming a demonstration region would be best realized with support requests from the Valley Congressional delegation.

Background:
The Administration is organizing an Initiative for Sustainable Communities through which federal agencies, starting with HUD, EPA, DOT, and DOE, will coordinate and integrate energies and resources with local ones in place-based strategies. An Office for Sustainable Communities has been formed under HUD's Deputy Secretary Ron Sims. Legislation to fund the federal interagency task force, the office, and local regional participants is being advanced through Congress (S.1619-Dodd).

Deputy Secretary Ron Sims visited the Valley and met with federal agencies, housing authorities, non-profits and city and county officials who discussed with him that the Valley could provide communities that would be ideal demonstration sites and even living labs for the sustainability initiative. Through Region IX's Federal Regional Council, a federal sustainability task force has been organized. In addition, the chair and vice-chairs of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership) wrote a letter urging Mr. Sims and the Office to consider the Valley and its communities as place-based demonstration sites. The federal task force, coordinated by the local HUD Office, believes that the Partnership along with the Valley Blueprint has already put together the regional infrastructure to achieve this national initiative. With the Partnership taking the lead role in administering the initiative through the established work groups, and especially the SJV Clean Energy Organization and the SJV Housing Trust, the initiative is expected to bring funding to the Valley communities and the Partnership.

Current Efforts:
On October 23, 2009, the Partnership's board of directors agreed to be the lead organization for the Sustainable Communities Initiative for the SJV, working with local HUD office to aid in development. Efforts will focused on demonstrating that particular cities/neighborhoods of concentrated poverty within the Valley can be sustainable (i.e. energy-efficient, walkable, safe) and can become models for others throughout the Valley, state and nation.

Steering Committee Includes:
California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, including the Land-Use, Agriculture and Housing Work Group; San Joaquin Valley Planners; San Joaquin Valley Housing Trust; San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Organization; Valley Councils of Government; Urban and Rural communities; Research & Advocacy Organizations (i.e. PolicyLink), HUD and other Federal/State Partners.

For Additional Information Contact:

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