CLIMATE COMMUNITIES

May 29, 2008

The Honorable Elizabeth Dole
United States Senate
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
United States Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act and Provide Resources for Local Government Climate Change Action

Dear Senators Dole and Burr:

On behalf of local elected leaders across North Carolina, we write to urge your support for the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act of 2008 (S. 3036), which provides direct resources for local government actions that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as cleaner transportation, green buildings, renewable energy, and sustainable development.

Climate change is a critical global challenge that could lead to an increasing number of droughts, greater risk of wildfires, more flooding, rising sea levels, and other severe weather events. By addressing the climate challenge, America can help achieve some of its most important national objectives – energy independence and national security, economic competitiveness and job creation, protection of public health and the environment, and sustainable community development.

The Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act would create a market-based system to substantially reduce GHG emissions by 2050. This important legislation will achieve significant GHG reductions from electric power, transportation, manufacturing, and natural gas sources through a "cap-and-trade" system that harnesses the incentives of the free market to reduce pollution. The bill system is modeled closely on America's successful efforts to address acid rain.

In April 2008, local government leaders from more than 40 communities met with Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Joseph Lieberman (ID-CT) and John Warner (R-VA), the sponsors of the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act, to demonstrate the essential role of local governments in using cleaner transportation, green buildings, alternative energy, and sustainable development to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the impacts of climate change. During a press conference with *Climate Communities* members, Senators Boxer, Lieberman and

Warner publicly pledged to amend their legislation to provide federal resources for climate actions at the local government level.

Local government action is critical to addressing America's climate change challenge. Cities and counties have the ability to promote, encourage and lead the effort to reduce GHG pollution. Localities are uniquely suited to implement land use planning, building codes, infrastructure improvements, green technology, sustainable economic development and other local actions that must underlie climate change progress. Local governments are also the first responders to the impacts of climate change. It is local governments that must take the lead in dealing with drought, water shortages, wildfires, flooding, rising sea levels, infrastructure disruption, and other impacts of climate change.

Mayors from more than 800 cities have signed the Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement pledging to take actions in their communities to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets for reductions in GHG emissions. Approximately 30 counties representing over 35 million people have joined Cool Counties and pledged to reduce GHG emissions by 80 percent by the year 2050.

In North Carolina, local governments are developing innovative climate change programs and policies and serve as the laboratories for innovative approaches for reducing GHG emissions. However, communities are only in the early stages of confronting the climate challenge, and there is a critical need for capacity building at the local level to handle the substantial technical, institutional, and organizational issues that are involved in establishing and implementing local climate change programs.

Senators Boxer, Lieberman and Warner have amended their legislation to provide significant federal resources to help cities and counties reduce GHG emissions. Their manager's amendment provides $136 billion through 2050 for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program, which would enable cities and counties to enact strategies that reduce fossil fuel emissions, cut total energy use, and improve energy efficiency. The bill also dedicates significant resources for local mass transit projects.

Again, we encourage you to support the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act and ensure that the legislation supports local government efforts to reduce GHG emissions. We look forward to working with you to develop an effective local-federal partnership to address climate change.

Climate Communities is a national coalition of cities and counties that is educating federal policymakers about the essential role of local governments in addressing climate change. *Climate Communities* is advocating for significant new federal resources to support local actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For more information about Climate Communities, contact Andrew Seth at (202) 454-3922 or aseth@tfgnet.com

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mayor Pro Tem P.E. Bazemore
City of Monroe

Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow
Durham County Board of Commissioners

Mayor Bill Bell
City of Durham

Mayor Pro Tem Julie Aberg Robison
Town of Cary

Mayor Pro Tem Cora Cole-McFadden
City of Durham

Mayor Rebecca R. Smothers
City of High Point

Mayor Allen Joines
City of Winston-Salem

Mayor Bill Thunberg
Town of Mooresville

Mayor Bobby Kilgore
City of Monroe

Mayor Harold Weinbrecht, Jr.
Town of Cary

Mayor J. Scott Padgett
City of Concord