



# The United States Conference of Mayors

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
Monday, June 15, 2009

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## SEATTLE MAYOR GREG NICKELS IS SWORN IN AS THE 67<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

Providence, RI – Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels today was sworn in as the 67<sup>th</sup> President of the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) during the final session of the group's 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. Local leaders came together for four days at the Rhode Island Convention Center to discuss and debate policy issues that impact urban America and metropolitan areas.

As the President of the Conference, Mayor Nickels will set the Conference's agenda, appoint committee and task force chairs and serve as the national spokesperson for the organization.

Nickels was already a leader among the mayors' organization. In February of 2005, he introduced the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement, whereby mayors have pledged to meet Kyoto Protocol goals and significantly curb greenhouse gas emissions by 2012. Over 950 mayors have already signed the agreement and are working to make their cities energy efficient.

Mayor Nickels was also instrumental in getting an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant – conceived by the Conference and a top priority of the mayors – to be included in the Federal Recovery Bill. This grant funds an unprecedented \$2.8 billion to support mayoral efforts to meet the goals of the Mayors' Climate Protection agreement.

In his inaugural remarks Mayor Nickels said, "Now more than ever, we need clear communication between the federal government and the cities. ... Today facing this Great Recession, I submit that we must forge with the federal government a New Deal with America's Cities. ... For too long, we've been trapped in a structure that put the federal government at the top of the chart, followed by the states. It doesn't work today. ... We need a New Deal with America's cities that views the diversity of our metro areas as a strength instead of a burden."

In the midst of the economic crisis that is forcing many mayors to make major budget cuts, much of the discussion at the meeting was focused on stimulus implementation and impediments. Mayor Nickels pledged that, "The first thing I intend to do is to critically review every aspect of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We need to see the stimulus as an opportunity to highlight what worked and what didn't to make a case for a New Deal with America's cities."

Nickels continued, "Here in the Conference of Mayors, we know that our nation's urban areas provide more than just the foundation of building a new prosperity. When you look at the numbers, our strength becomes clear. We are the top foundation, pillars and roof of our national economy – the nation's top 100 metro[politan] areas generate 75 percent of gross domestic product."

At their concluding business session today, the nation's mayors debated and voted on policy recommendations to forward to Congress and the Obama Administration. Among the measures passed were a resolution on cap-and-trade policy, a resolution to make the assault weapons ban permanent, a resolution to support marriage equality for same-sex couples, a resolution to support the Administration's health care reform principles and a resolution to make high speed rail as priority in this country. The entire list and text of passed resolutions, thus new policy of the organization, can be found on the USCM website at [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org).

During the meeting, the mayors also elected new leadership: Vice President Burnsville, MN Mayor Elizabeth Kautz, Second Vice President Los Angeles, CA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; Trustees Honolulu, HI Mayor Mufi Hannemann, Southfield, MI Mayor Brenda Lawrence, Dallas, TX Mayor Tom Leppert, Philadelphia PA Mayor Michael Nutter and

Bowling Green, KY Mayor Elaine Walker; Advisory Board Members Salt Lake City, UT Mayor Ralph Becker, Arlington, TX Mayor Robert Cluck, Rochester, NY Mayor Robert Duffy, Bridgeport, CT Mayor Bill Finch, Long Beach, CA Mayor Bob Foster, Redondo Beach, CA Michael Gin, Chattanooga, TN Mayor Ron Littlefield, Laredo, TX Mayor Raul Salinas, St. Louis, MO Mayor Francis Slay, Mesa, AZ Mayor Scott Smith and Piscataway, NJ Mayor Brian Wahler.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.

For the entire text of Mayor Nickels' speech, please visit [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org).