STATEMENT OF U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS PRESIDENT
BURNSVILLE, MN MAYOR ELIZABETH KAUTZ
ON PRESIDENT OBAMA'S FY 2012 BUDGET

Mayors Disappointed with Cuts to Community Development Block Grants and Elimination of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants; Applaud High Speed Rail, Public Transportation, COPS Funding

Washington, D.C. – On behalf of the nation’s mayors, The U.S. Conference of Mayors President Burnsville, MN Mayor Elizabeth Kautz released the following statement in response to President Obama’s FY 2012 Budget:

“The nation’s mayors are pleased that the President’s budget proposes significant boosts to programs that impact MainStreet America because investment in cities and metropolitan areas makes for a strong national economy. Specifically, we welcome the Administration’s clear commitment to public transit, high-speed rail and an infrastructure bank, the doubling of COPS hiring grants, and increased funding for homelessness assistance and child nutrition programs.

“However, we are disappointed with the Administration’s proposal to cut by 7.5 percent Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and eliminate the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG), which reaches cities and county large and small in the U.S. and is specifically targeted to local needs.

“With the economic downturn forcing mayors and city governments to implement ongoing budget cuts, as well as rollbacks at the state level, this is the worst possible time to cut direct funding to cities like Community Development Block Grants and Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants. In fact, by the end of this year, more than 100 metropolitan areas are projected to still have double-digit unemployment.

“Both direct funding city block grants create jobs, leverage private economic development, build infrastructure, promote homeownership, support energy-efficient
improvements, and provides social services, which is why CDBG and EECBG have both had strong bipartisan support in Congress.

“With 85 percent of the people in this country living in cities and metropolitan areas, we believe the best way to "out-innovate, “out-educate” and “out-build" is to make investments that foster growth.

“Investing in America's cities -- in its people -- can produce the type of economic expansion the President envisions. Clearly, our cities and metropolitan areas are the centers of our national economy. Without job growth in our cities and metropolitan areas, there can be no sustained national recovery to win the future.

“And while the Administration has made new green industries and other energy investments a priority for job creation, we are disappointed that the Department of Energy’s budget does not fund green job and clean energy block grants to help accelerate the momentum of green actions by cities and the private sector across the country.

“Yet, even with a 12 percent increase in the Department of Energy's FY 2012 budget, the President's request ‘zeros out’ EECBG, a major disappointment to the nation's mayors who have made its funding a top priority.

“Without strong commitment by the Administration and Congress to the EECBG and level funding for CDBG, mayors will be significantly constrained as they work to improve local communities and expand job opportunities.

“As the national debate on budget priorities unfolds and the House of Representatives puts forth its proposals, the nation’s mayors look forward to taking our message to the Senate in the hopes of helping working families and building stronger communities where people can thrive.”

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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 city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. More information about the Conference is available at usmayors.org.