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December 22, 2008

President-Elect Barack Obama
451 6th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear President-Elect Obama:

Your recent election could not have come at a more challenging time for our economy or for our nation. I support your plan to swiftly enact an economic stimulus package that invests in America's infrastructure, promotes energy efficiency, and creates new green jobs. These are investments in our communities and in our economy that will put thousands of Hoosiers to work. Now, as you and the Congress work to develop a stimulus plan, I urge you to give particular attention to those communities and middle-class families that have been hit especially hard by the economic downturn.

While the impacts of the current economy—the credit crunch, mortgage crisis, and high unemployment—are far reaching, we should not ignore the fact that some communities, like Elkhart and Howard counties in my congressional district, have been impacted more than others. As you discuss the process and formula by which stimulus funds will be allocated, I urge you to consider ways to direct some of these investments to those communities that are suffering the most. I encourage you to develop an allocation formula that takes into consideration factors that include unemployment, foreclosure rates, loss of tax base, and municipal revenue shortfalls.

In addition, I have read with great interest about your desire to include middle-class tax relief as part of the stimulus package. Middle-class families are the backbone of our economy and embody the American spirit. I strongly support your call to use the stimulus package as an opportunity to provide tax relief to those middle-class families who are struggling to care for their families while dealing with higher costs and reduced wages.

There is no doubt that a bold stimulus plan is necessary to jump start our economy and lay the groundwork for a more competitive and energy independent future. However, this plan must also recognize and address the unique challenges facing middle-class communities across our nation. The American people demand non-partisan, thoughtful, and pragmatic leadership, and they deserve a swift and effective response from Washington to the economic crisis. I look forward to working with your Administration and my colleagues in the 111th Congress to make our communities stronger, our businesses more competitive, and working families more secure.

Sincerely,



Joe Donnelly
Member of Congress