

111TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2222

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to make grants for programs promoting community greening initiatives, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 30, 2009

Ms. SCHWARTZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to make grants for programs promoting community greening initiatives, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Green Communities  
5       Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSES; DEFINITIONS.**

7       (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1           (1) Landscaping adds to the economic value  
2           and sales appeal of commercial real estate and in-  
3           creases office occupancy rates.

4           (2) Greening can change people's perceptions of  
5           their neighborhoods, reduce violence and crime, and  
6           increase neighborhood stability.

7           (3) Planting new trees, improving streetscapes,  
8           and cleaning vacant lots increases property values.

9           (4) People will stay longer and shop more in  
10          shopping districts that are well landscaped.

11          (5) Improvements to neighborhood parks in-  
12          crease the value of single-family homes in the sur-  
13          rounding community.

14          (6) Homes adjacent to vacant lots that are  
15          greened have a much higher property value than  
16          homes adjacent to vacant lots that have not been  
17          greened.

18          (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to—

19               (1) promote investment in greening projects  
20               and programs as effective economic development  
21               tools;

22               (2) connect urban economic development initia-  
23               tives with environmental initiatives;

24               (3) improve quality of life for city residents;  
25               and

1 (4) encourage public-private partnerships.

2 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

3 (1) COMMUNITY GREENING INITIATIVES.—The  
4 term “community greening initiatives” means pro-  
5 grams increasing economic development through en-  
6 vironmental improvements.

7 (2) ELIGIBLE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—The  
8 term “eligible nonprofit organization” means a non-  
9 profit organization that receives a grant under sec-  
10 tion 4.

11 (3) ELIGIBLE PROGRAM PARTNER.—The term  
12 “eligible program partner” means a municipality  
13 that receives a grant under section 3.

14 (4) GREEN ROOF.—The term “green roof”  
15 means a roof consisting of vegetation and soil or a  
16 growing medium planted over a waterproofing mem-  
17 brane.

18 (5) GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE.—  
19 The term “green stormwater infrastructure” means  
20 systems and practices that use or mimic natural  
21 processes to infiltrate, evapotranspire, or reuse  
22 stormwater on the site where it occurs rather than  
23 transporting the water to a stream or treatment fa-  
24 cility.

1           (6) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—The term  
 2           “nonprofit organization” means an organization that  
 3           is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Rev-  
 4           enue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under sec-  
 5           tion 501(a) of such Code.

6           (7) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
 7           the Secretary of Commerce.

8           (8) URBAN FORESTRY.—The term “urban for-  
 9           estry” means an integrated citywide or neighbor-  
 10          hood-wide approach to the planting, care, and man-  
 11          agement of trees in the city or the neighborhood in  
 12          order to ensure environmental and social benefits for  
 13          residents.

14 **SEC. 3. INITIATIVES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND**  
 15 **GREENING.**

16          (a) GRANT AUTHORITY.—To the extent funds are  
 17          available, the Secretary, through the Economic Develop-  
 18          ment Administration, shall make grants to municipalities  
 19          for promoting community greening initiatives.

20          (b) SELECTION OF ELIGIBLE PROGRAM PART-  
 21          NERS.—The Secretary, in consultation with the eligible  
 22          nonprofit organizations, shall select 80 municipalities to  
 23          receive grants under this section. The Secretary shall en-  
 24          sure that the municipalities meet—

1           (1) the criteria described by section 209(b) of  
2       the Public Works and Economic Development Act of  
3       1965 (42 U.S.C. 3149(b)); or

4           (2) the circumstances described by section  
5       209(c) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 3149(c)).

6       (c) COMMUNITY GREENING INITIATIVES.—An eligi-  
7       ble program partner, with technical assistance and train-  
8       ing from an eligible nonprofit organization as provided  
9       under section 4(b), shall develop and plan a community  
10      greening initiative. Such initiatives may include—

11           (1) revitalizing municipal parks and public  
12      spaces;

13           (2) landscaping community gateways and key  
14      corridors;

15           (3) tree plantings and urban forestry projects;

16           (4) comprehensive planning for open space  
17      preservation;

18           (5) education, training, and volunteer manage-  
19      ment concerning community green initiatives;

20           (6) green roof construction;

21           (7) green stormwater infrastructure; or

22           (8) vacant lot management.

23      (d) IMPLEMENTING INITIATIVES.—

24           (1) COMPLETION OF DEVELOPING AND PLAN-  
25      NING.—The Secretary may make a grant under this

1 section only to an eligible program partner that has  
2 successfully developed and planned a community  
3 greening initiative under subsection (c), as deter-  
4 mined by the Secretary.

5 (2) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants under this section  
6 shall be used by an eligible program partner to im-  
7 plement the community greening initiative developed  
8 under subsection (c). An eligible program partner  
9 may not receive a grant under this section for a  
10 community greening initiative that takes more than  
11 2 years to complete.

12 (3) GRANT AMOUNT.—The Secretary may not  
13 award a grant under this section in an amount that  
14 is more than \$2,000,000.

15 (4) MATCHING FUNDS.—An eligible program  
16 partner receiving a grant under this section shall  
17 provide, either directly or through private contribu-  
18 tions, non-Federal matching funds equal to not less  
19 than 50 percent of the amount of the grant. Such  
20 matching funds shall be used for implementing a  
21 community greening initiative.

22 (5) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after an  
23 eligible program partner implements a community  
24 greening initiative, the eligible nonprofit organiza-  
25 tion that assisted the eligible program partner under

1 subsection (c) shall submit to the Secretary a report  
2 assessing the implementation of the initiative.

3 **SEC. 4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING BY ELIGI-**  
4 **BLE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.**

5 (a) SELECTION OF ELIGIBLE NONPROFIT ORGANIZA-  
6 TIONS.—To the extent funds are available, the Secretary  
7 shall make grants to, or enter into contracts with, 5 non-  
8 profit organizations to provide technical assistance and  
9 training to eligible program partners. The Secretary shall  
10 select nonprofit organizations that have experience with—

11 (1) planning and implementing projects con-  
12 cerning urban open space, landscape management,  
13 and community greening initiatives;

14 (2) land and water conservation;

15 (3) working on the community level;

16 (4) forming partnerships or regional consor-  
17 tiums;

18 (5) urban ecology; and

19 (6) other activities the Secretary considers ap-  
20 propriate.

21 (b) TECHNICAL TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE.—In ac-  
22 cordance with section 3(c), eligible nonprofit organizations  
23 shall provide eligible program partners with technical as-  
24 sistance and training for the following activities:

1           (1) Developing, planning, implementing, and as-  
2           sessing community greening initiatives.

3           (2) Developing and implementing training and  
4           workshops for municipal agencies and local partners.

5           (3) Evaluating the community greening initia-  
6           tive.

7           (c) PERIOD.—A grant or agreement under this sec-  
8           tion shall be for a period of 5 years.

9           (d) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 90 days  
10          after the end of each fiscal year for which amounts are  
11          made available for grants under this section, the Secretary  
12          shall submit to Congress a report on the technical assist-  
13          ance and training provided under this section. Each report  
14          shall describe the actions taken by the Secretary to ensure  
15          that technical assistance and training is responsive to the  
16          needs of eligible program partners.

17       **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

18          (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-  
19          priated to carry out this Act—

20               (1) \$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2010,  
21               2013, and 2014; and

22               (2) \$90,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011  
23               and 2012.

24          (b) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—

25               (1) ELIGIBLE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.—



1           (A) Not less than 85 percent of the  
2           amounts made available to carry out this Act  
3           for each of fiscal years 2010, 2013, and 2014  
4           shall be made available for technical assistance  
5           and training by eligible nonprofit organizations  
6           under section 4.

7           (B) Not less than 28 percent of the  
8           amounts made available to carry out this Act  
9           for each of fiscal years 2011 and 2012 shall be  
10          made available for technical assistance and  
11          training by eligible nonprofit organizations  
12          under section 4.

13          (2) ELIGIBLE PROGRAM PARTNERS.—Not less  
14          than 66 percent of the amounts made available to  
15          carry out this Act for each of fiscal years 2011 and  
16          2012 shall be made available for the planning, devel-  
17          oping, and implementing of community greening ini-  
18          tiatives by eligible program partners under section 3.

19          (c) AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Funds  
20          made available under this Act shall remain available until  
21          expended.

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