July 24, 2017

Mr. Daniel Cohen
Office of the General Counsel
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW, Room 6A245
Washington, DC 20585

RE: Regulatory Burden RFI

Dear Mr. Cohen,

On behalf of the nation’s 19,000 cities, villages and towns, we thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) implementation of President Trump’s Executive Order 13771 on “Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs.” Thank you for considering the local government perspective on regulations that may be appropriate for repeal, replacement or modification. We offer comments on both energy policies and the importance of the intergovernmental partnership for consideration.

Energy Policies to Enhance National Security and Increase Energy Independence

The nation’s local elected officials recognize that climate change is a leading environmental threat facing cities, which must be addressed comprehensively. As such, city leaders are at the forefront of efforts to encourage energy conservation, improve energy efficiency and invest in renewable energy in their communities. City-led initiatives have resulted in millions of dollars in energy savings, helping residents and businesses save on their energy bills, along with taxpayer savings from municipal government operations. These programs create jobs and grow the economy, as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lower the energy costs for citizens who can least afford it.

Therefore, NLC urges the federal government to work with local governments to develop and implement a sustainable energy policy that is reliable, equitable, environmentally responsible and evidence-based that will: promote the most efficient and affordable use of all energy sources while protecting the environment and protect the supply of energy by promoting the use of renewable sources and alternative fuels, while developing techniques to reduce the environmental impact of the use of conventional fossil fuels.
Additionally, we call on the federal government to support all cost-effective energy efficiency measures in all types of buildings in order to reduce the use and production of energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes developing regulations and tax incentives that would improve the energy efficiency of appliances and equipment for industrial, agricultural, commercial and residential consumers.

Finally, we urge the federal government to establish a partnership with local governments and provide appropriate sufficient funding through the energy block grant structure or other funding structures at DOE to further incentivize clean energy at the local level.

The capacity of local government to respond to federal demands is limited due to our own and our citizen’s limited financial resources. Investments in energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy offer opportunities to save taxpayers and citizens money, freeing up capital for other needs.

_Supporting the Intergovernmental Partnership_

It is important that federal, state and local governments work together to craft reasonable and practicable rules and regulations. As partners in the intergovernmental process, local governments should be at the table when rules are being crafted to provide an important perspective on ensuring that rules are effective, implementable, offer local flexibility, avoid a “one-size-fits-all” approach, and avoid an unfunded mandate.

The federalism consultation process is an essential component of the intergovernmental process, and local elected officials value the opportunity to provide direct input into the rulemaking process before rules are even drafted. This early feedback and input helps the federal government develop rules that are effective, reasonable, and implementable at the local level. We continue to urge the federal government to listen to and consider the perspective of local governments early and often during the rulemaking process.

In closing, working together with the federal government, we can craft laws, policies and rules that meet our mutual goals of protecting the health, safety and welfare of our citizens, while enhancing national security and increasing our nation’s energy independence. If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn Berndt, Program Director for Sustainability, at (202) 626-3101 or berndt@nlc.org.

Sincerely,

Clarence E. Anthony
CEO and Executive Director