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December 8, 2008

President-Elect Barack Obama
Obama-Biden Presidential Transition Project
451 6th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20270

SUBJECT: Economic Stimulus: School Modernization, Renovation & Repair

Dear President-Elect Obama:

Californians for School Facilities (CSF) is a statewide coalition working to build federal support for state and local efforts to repair and modernize our public schools. Multiple studies show that safe and modern schools are linked to improved academic performance, teacher retention and job creation.

As you prepare an economic stimulus package for consideration by the 111th Congress, CSF asks that the school modernization, renovation and repair initiatives such as **HR 3021, the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act and HR 2470, The America's Better Classrooms Act** be included. Stimulus funding for school modernization will help states meet local community school facility needs by providing resources to repair, renovate and modernize America's schools while promoting green standards. Equally important, funding will stimulate the creation of more than 100,000 new jobs nationally in construction-related services.

California has more than \$300 million in unfunded emergency repair projects and more than \$1.5 billion in approved but unfunded deferred maintenance projects in five-year plans. California school districts and county offices can have \$300 million in school repair projects under contract in three to six months once the funds have been allocated to the school districts. Quick administrative action by federal and state agencies will speed the process. For example, HR 3021 requires the Department of Education and state agencies to process the funding within 30 days.

California also has a need of \$9 billion for new school construction funds and \$3.4 billion in modernization needs, in addition to the deferred maintenance. The stimulus funding adopted in the House Stimulus Package, H.R. 7110, set a formula grant program to award funds for local school district school construction and modernization. School districts in California would use these grants for repairs, renovations, environmental improvements and for developing energy efficient systems in schools. We can also build on the highly successful Qualified Zone Academy Bond program which has been well-utilized in California.

CSF urges that school facilities be included in the domestic economic stimulus program. We greatly appreciate your interest in the education of children in California and your support for initiatives to help local communities undertake projects to renovate, repair and modernize schools.

Thank you again for your interest in students, schools and teachers in California.

Sincerely,

Anna Ferrera