

## Local obligations will suffer under planned federal budget cuts

BY SAM ADAMS  
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST



Sam Adams is the mayor of Portland. He recently returned from the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington D.C.

Last August, Congress passed a bill authorizing the president to increase the nation's debt ceiling, while also requiring that the deficit be reduced by cutting spending by \$2.3 trillion over 10 years. However, \$860 billion of these cuts come from non-defense discretionary spending – community development block grants, housing programs, education, social programs, workforce development, transportation, and other programs that are vital to cities like Portland. Local jurisdictions rely on those funds – either directly from the federal government, or as pass-throughs from state government – to keep our local programs and safety nets intact.

The proposed federal cuts could be devastating locally, in Portland and Multnomah County, and in other metro areas. From social-service programs and affordable housing to economic development programs and infrastructure projects that put people back to work directly, our city and county rely on federal funding.

During my recent visit to Washington D.C. to participate in the 80th Winter meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), I met many other mayors who shared my concerns over these proposed cuts. During the meeting, the USCM also released a new economic report that highlights the ongoing challenge our cities face: While job growth is expected to increase in nearly all metro areas this year, it will not be by enough to reduce the unemployment rate below 8 percent.

Against this backdrop of a slow recovery and looming federal budget cuts, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa spoke to hundreds of my fellow mayors about an agenda to put America back to work. In particular, he called for investing in infrastructure jobs by passing bipartisan transportation legislation, cutting taxes for working Americans by extending the payroll tax cut, providing relief to those looking for work by extending unemployment benefits, and strengthening communities by protecting the Community Development Block Grant program.

The City of Portland has included in its 2012 Federal Legislative Agenda similar action items, as we work to protect the funding of the vital programs that are threatened by these cuts. Throughout 2011, my council colleagues and I have let our congressional delegation know how budget cuts have threatened services to our most vulnerable populations. We fight for these programs every year, but now that there is a statutory requirement to cut them, it makes our job that much tougher.

The City of Portland supports federal legislation aimed to create both near- and long-term jobs. Direct municipal aid provides local governments the flexibility to generate economic growth and create employment opportunities. The city believes that such legislation should include traditional infrastructure funding for transportation and water priorities, as well as funding for social services and housing assistance to prevent families from losing their homes, and substantial investment in education to provide for an educated workforce.

Specifically, the city will continue to communicate the impact of HUD budget cuts on the city's most vulnerable populations, and to advocate for the highest possible levels of funding for community development block grants. The city will also explore partnerships with federal agencies, such as the Small Business Administration, to pursue opportunities to promote entrepreneurship and small business development. While in D.C., I sat down with Small Business Administration Deputy Administrator Marie Johns, and invited her to Portland this March to meet with upstart entrepreneurs who want to realize their dreams of owning a small business. My goal is to help connect those entrepreneurs with resources offered by the federal government and advice from more experienced business owners.

At the previous USCM meeting, at the urging of Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy, I fought for a resolution calling on President Barack Obama to end our costly and wasteful wars as quickly as possible, and investing those

savings back into domestic needs. Now, with our troops coming home, it is even more important that we turn our sights to domestic issues, and support programs and policies that provide for jobs and more here at home.

On Jan. 12, the Portland City Council passed a resolution establishing as a position that the City of Portland praises our United States troops and their families, applauds the end of the Iraq War and supports the further drawdown of troops in Afghanistan. As the United States reduces its presence in those countries, my council colleagues and I are

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formally asking the President to redirect these war dollars home to meet vital human needs, promote job creation, rebuild our infrastructure, aid municipal and state governments, and develop a new economy based upon renewable, sustainable energy and reduce the federal debt.

While we urge the federal government to help cities with our recovery, we are also working locally to boost our economy. At the USCM meeting, I participated in the Metro Exports Task Force and highlighted Portland's partnership with the Brookings Institute to boost exports in the region. In February, Portland will officially roll out our local export plan.

At USCM and here in Portland, our collective focus is centered on getting people back to work and helping our communities recover from the recession. We need the federal government to be our partner in this effort, and we will be working hard in the coming months to achieve these goals.

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A wage and hour class action called Crawford v. Labor Ready Northwest, Inc. has been filed on behalf of certain Oregon employees of Labor Ready Northwest. The class consists of everyone who has worked for Labor Ready Northwest in the state of Oregon at least once on a repeat ticket since June 27, 1997. A "repeat ticket" is an assignment by Labor Ready Northwest to the same job on the next business day.

The worker who brought this class action and Labor Ready Northwest have now reached a settlement which an arbitrator must approve. If you are a member of the class, depending on when you first worked for the company, you may receive up to either \$25 or \$50 from Labor Ready. If the arbitrator approves the settlement, your rights will be affected unless you take yourself out of this case.

On November 28, 2011 a Notice of Class Action Settlement was sent to the last known address of many class members. That notice explains the settlement, including how much will be paid to class members who file claims on time if the settlement is approved; how to object to the settlement; and how to take yourself out of the case. If you did not get this notice, you can obtain it by calling 1-888-226-8857, or writing:

**Oregon Labor Ready Class Action**  
P.O. Box 26170  
Santa Ana, CA 92799

and providing your name, current address, current daytime telephone number and current email address. You may also obtain a copy of the notice at [www.lrnwsettlement.com](http://www.lrnwsettlement.com).

Please act quickly. The deadline for filing a claim, for objecting to the settlement and for asking not to be in the case is February 6, 2012. If the settlement is approved and you have not made a claim or asked to be taken out of the class, you will not be paid anything but still will not be able to bring your own suit.