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Mayor Jean Stothert & City Council Members
City of Omaha
1819 Farnam Street
Omaha, NE 68183

Dear Mayor Stothert and Council Members,

We are writing today to respectfully request that you reallocate general funds in order to retain a position in the Office of Sustainable Development. It is our opinion that this Office serves a critical role in our community.

Verdis Group's mission is to integrate sustainable strategies that help organizations flourish. With that as a guide, we have been pleased to work with some of Omaha's largest and most noteworthy employers: The Nebraska Medical Center, UNMC, Omaha Public Schools, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium, and Metropolitan Community College, to name a few. They view sustainability as critical to their success.

The City's operations are significant in scope and scale and demand continued focus and attention in order to effectively manage them. Energy costs alone represent \$6 million in expenses per year, and the city emitted over 93,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions in 2012. Fortunately, due in large part to the efforts of ECO-Omaha, both metrics are significantly lower now than they were in 2009. More specifically:

- 16 percent reduction in energy consumption; resulting in roughly \$775,000 *per year* in avoided energy costs
- 13 percent reduction in municipal greenhouse gas emissions; equates to the removal of 3,125 cars from the road

As the shepherd and driver of both the Environmental Element and the Comprehensive Energy Management Plan, the Office of Sustainable Development has and will continue to play an integral role in making our city more desirable for new businesses and citizens. We are on par with peer cities such as Kansas City, Oklahoma City and Des Moines; if, however, ECO-Omaha is eliminated, we will fall behind and lose ground. The National League of Cities has documented a direct connection between strong economic development and sustainable development.

There's a reason why the vast majority of Fortune 500 firms have sustainability programs that measure, manage and disclose their environmental sustainability strategies: it's important and it saves them money. World-class cities are following suit with similar efforts. Let's not allow Omaha to buck the trend and fall behind. Please ensure that the Office of Sustainable Development continues to do the great work that is necessary to keep Omaha a world-class city.

Sincerely,

Craig Moody
Principal

Daniel Lawse
Principal

P.S. And oh, by the way, it's good for the environment, too. Cleaner air. Cleaner water. A healthier earth.