



# CITY OF CULVER CITY

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**THOMAS AUJERO SMALL**

February 13, 2017

The Honorable Kamala Harris  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Subject: Infrastructure Financing Depends on the Municipal Bond Tax Exemption**

Dear Senator Harris:

As you may be aware, Representatives Hultgren and Ruppertsberger, Co-Chairs of the Congressional Municipal Finance Caucus, are circulating the attached letter, regarding infrastructure financing and municipal bond tax exemption, to Members of Congress. Both of these Congressmen have accepted a call to action to address threats to tax exempt municipal financing. In 2015, they co-authored a letter, garnering support from 120 Members of Congress, urging House leadership to protect the status of tax exempt municipal bonds. Over the past two years, they have worked with state and local governments to educate other policymakers on the importance of the tax exemption.

Municipal bonds, such as those which may be issued by cities like Culver City, are necessary to fund public projects. I wanted to take this opportunity to reach out to you in hopes that you will sign on to the attached letter. If you would like to sign the below letter, please contact Bill Hulse (Representative Hultgren's office) at [Bill.Hulse@mail.house.gov](mailto:Bill.Hulse@mail.house.gov) or David Heitlinger (Representative Ruppertsberger office) at [David.Heitlinger@mail.house.gov](mailto:David.Heitlinger@mail.house.gov). Additionally, if you have any questions, or if you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at (310) 775-1664.

Sincerely,

Jim B. Clarke  
Mayor

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Members of the City Council  
John M. Nachbar, City Manager

## Dear Colleague Letter

Dear Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Neal:

As Congress considers tax reform and infrastructure financing, we, the undersigned, write to express our strong support for an already potent tool already in hand – the tax-exempt municipal bond. For more than a century, states and local governments have depended on this reliable and efficient means of financing.

Nearly two-thirds of core infrastructure investments in the United States are financed with municipal bonds. In 2015 alone, more than \$400 billion in municipal bonds were issued to finance the projects that touch the daily lives of every American citizen and business. They are the roads we drive on, schools for our children, affordable family housing, water systems that supply safe drinking water, courthouses, hospitals and clinics to treat the sick, airports and ports that help move products domestically and overseas, and, in some cases, the utility plants that power our homes, businesses, and factories. These are the pro-growth investments which spur job creation, help our economies grow, and strengthen our communities.

A combination of local control and local responsibility makes municipal bonds an incredibly effective and efficient tool. Voters throughout the country overwhelmingly support tax-exempt municipal bonds, which are either approved by locally-elected officials or directly through bond referenda – fiscal federalism at its finest. This must help explain why the default rate is less than 0.01%. Federal tax exemption reduces the cost of issuing municipal bonds, but it is these voters who will pay the interest and principle on this debt. As a result, over the last decade overall state and local borrowing has actually declined in proportion to the economy, while still financing more than \$2 trillion in new infrastructure investments. And, if simply left alone, municipal bonds likely will finance another \$3 trillion in new infrastructure investments by 2026.

Furthermore, millions of Americans depend on municipal bonds for their economic security, and invest in them because of their low-risk nature. Nearly three-quarters of individual investors earn less than \$200,000 per year and more than three-quarters are 55 or older. Businesses also rely on municipal bonds as a safe, stable, long-term investment.

In conclusion, changes to the tax-code should recognize the vital role of tax-exempt municipal bonds. Any changes under consideration to the tax exempt status that would increase the cost of financing for states and local government should be provided very careful consideration. We believe the current tax-exempt status contributes to efficient economic growth that benefits all Americans.