April 28, 2010

Salisbury University
1101 Camden Avenue
Salisbury, MD 21801

Dear Smart Growth Day Participants:

Thank you for your kind invitation to participate in Salisbury University’s Smart Growth Day. Only extensive travel prevents me from being with you today.

It is hard to believe that just a decade and a half ago, we started a program that today is nationally and even internationally recognized as the smart growth movement. When we first put the program together and legislature adopted it, smart growth was almost exclusively an environmental effort to protect the Chesapeake Bay by limiting sprawl and protecting open space.

I remember working with the citizens of the state and with local officials as we started to implement the program. Two of our earliest demonstration projects were, in fact, located right in Salisbury.

Today, smart growth has evolved and grown into so much more than an environmental program. It is about health as we fight obesity coming from our car oriented society. It is about economic development as knowledge based companies seek out communities that have a real sense of place. It is about national security as we seek to reduce our dependency on petroleum by creating walkable and transit oriented communities. And, of course, it is about global climate change as we seek to reduce vehicle miles traveled and the resulting emissions.

Our small state can be proud to have had such an impact on the entire country. In fact, it goes well beyond our boundaries. In addition to working regularly with the Canadian provinces, I had the honor last December of speaking in Istanbul to an international conference on smart growth and sustainability. I will be speaking next month on the same topic in Queensland, Australia.
I am very pleased to note that smart growth has become an important part of the national administration’s program. President Obama regularly refers to smart growth, particularly in connection with sustainability and economic competitiveness. In many ways he has clearly put the “wind at our backs.”

Lastly, I note how appropriate it is that Salisbury University is having this Smart Growth Day. Across the country, universities have taken the lead in shaping smart growth and in shaping communities.

Best wishes for a successful day. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Parris N. Glendening