

DETROIT CITY COUNCIL MEMBER JOANN WATSON STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE 'BIG 3' AUTO REQUEST FOR \$34 BILLION DOLLARS IN FEDERAL BRIDGE LOANS

(DETROIT, MI...12-4-08) On December 4th & 5th Detroit City Council Member Jo Ann Watson will travel at her own expense to join many officials from urban areas throughout the United States, who will attend hearings sponsored by the U. S. Senate and the U. S. House to support the latest proposals from the Auto Industry seeking a \$34 billion loan. This statement is provided to be included in the written testimony for both hearings.

"The Detroit City Council has unanimously adopted resolutions in support of the automobile companies' request for a \$34 Billion Dollar loan. The American Automobile Industry must and will survive with more fuel-efficient vehicles, stronger financial incentives for consumers, job protection for autoworkers and economic growth for the nation.

Automotive mass production originated in Michigan, and helped launch an industrial revolution, which forever changed the fabric, the culture and the face of this nation. The role of the Auto industry as a provider of invaluable resources for the defense of the United States is a matter of public record, and deserves to be acknowledged at this critical time. Medical benefits for the masses, child labor laws, 5-day work-week and retirement/pension benefits have been other important historic by-products.

Furthermore, the Auto industry and its historic agreements with the United Auto Workers, played a major role in the ascent of the middle class, home ownership, expansion of the municipal tax base for schools, libraries, public safety, social and economic programs and support for small businesses whose patronage has been dependent on blue-collar working class families like auto workers.

As chair of the Detroit City Council Environmental Justice task force, and as an activist who has fought to close the Detroit incinerator and sponsor of legislation for citywide recycling, I am keenly aware that the auto industry must make giant leaps forward to harness alternative energy, and become a greater stakeholder in the 'Green' solution for our planet. Furthermore, as an elected official from a city which desperately needs an Urban Marshall plan federal infusion to invigorate the municipal infrastructure; including public work employment for qualified heads of households, increased mass transit resources, moratorium on foreclosures, universal health care and relief from utility shut-offs; I must support the Auto Industry request as part of my appeal for an Urban Marshall Plan; because the auto industry is the life's blood of manufacturing and the middle class/working class in the USA. I was born in Detroit, and I'm the granddaughter of a UAW member w/ Local 600, a Ford Plant. But, it's important to note that economic support for the auto industry is not just about Detroit! It's not just about the 'Big 3' CEO's! It's not just about the UAW! It's not just about loss of jobs for autoworkers! In truth all of us are interdependent, and our fates, like this economy- are interwoven inextricably into each of our cities and all of our lives. So, if the Federal Government can throw \$700 Billion dollars at Wall Street firms, who offered no plan & no 'trickle-down' to consumers, how can the Federal Government say no to the auto industry and middle-class/working class America? Since the Federal Government is allocating \$10 billion dollars a month to 're-build' Iraq—not to mention sacrificing thousands of lives, shouldn't American workers, American industry & American cities be 're-built' to create jobs, halt foreclosures & spur economic growth? It's time to say: "Yes, We Can!"