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U.S. House Passes ‘Jobs’ Bill That Will Provide \$200 Million For State Highways, Bridges

Before they departed for the Christmas recess, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation that will provide added federal stimulus funds for highway and bridge projects in West Virginia. The bill, HR 2487 – The “Jobs for Main Street Act of 2009,” will provide about \$200 million in added federal highways funds during 2010 for transportation projects across our state. The bill, however, still must gain the approval of the United States Senate.

Included in the bill are funds for various infrastructure investments projects, including \$27.5 billion for highways (freight and passenger rail and port projects also eligible); \$8.4 billion for transit; \$500 million for Airport Improvement Program grants; \$800 million for Amtrak fleet modernization; \$1 billion for clean water state revolving funds; \$1 billion for drinking water grants; \$2 billion for school and public housing rehabilitation; \$715 million for navigation and flood control projects by the Army Corps of Engineers; and \$100 million in water supply projects by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Provided below is an overview of the bill, which was prepared recently by Congressman Nick Rahall:

As Vice Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee I know every time America lets the dirt fly, jobs soar. For every billion dollars America spends on building highways, we put 28,500 people to work.

A new jobs bill, which includes investing in highways that I am working for, was just passed by the House. It will be a major investment West Virginia can put to work immediately. Our State would receive over \$243-million for highways, bridges, transit and clean water projects, creating shovel ready jobs while improving the infrastructure we need to continue to bring new industry and opportunity to our state. The “Jobs for Main Street Act of 2009” (H.R.2487), invests in infrastructure that drives economic growth beyond the guard rails and opens new opportunities for commerce and business development.

This will build on investments made through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to create and save jobs—and get this economy moving. Through the Recovery Act there were 7,900 highway and transit projects that broke ground and put thousands of workers back on the job. Nearly 210,000 direct and indirect transportation related jobs were created across our nation, and in West Virginia there were 1,674 jobs created as a result of Recovery Act transportation projects. According to the Congressional Budget

Office 600,000 to 1.6 million more American workers had jobs as a result of the Recovery Act investments.

In a report recently issued by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, West Virginia ranked ninth in the nation in spending stimulus funds with 92-percent of its highways and bridges projects out to bid, and 78-percent of projects underway.

The new Jobs for Main Street Act will invest \$75-billion nationwide to create or retain jobs, of which \$43.8 billion will be dedicated to infrastructure development, including \$27.5 billion for highways; \$8.4 billion for transit; and, \$800 million to Amtrak for fleet modernization.

The bill also would extend the current transportation programs through September 30, 2010, providing West Virginia with hundreds of millions of dollars for highways, bridges and public transit programs. State funded match requirements would be waived. This would allow the State to carry out important capital and operational programs and projects pending enactment of a multi-year measure authorizing future transportation programs.

This is a bold move. There is no one silver bullet, one plan, or piece of legislation that alone will solve double digit unemployment, but in combination with what the Recovery Act is already working to do; this bill can get thousands of workers back on the job.

Closing In On 300 WVBT Coalition Partners

The WVBT partner coalition is approaching the 300-partner mark. If you know of an organization, government official or business that would like our state to maintain a safe and modern roads, bridges and highway system, then please encourage them to add their support. Provided is a link to a convenient on-line sign-up form:

<http://www.keepwvmoving.org/getactive/signup.aspx>

Help Support WVBT's Ongoing Efforts In 2010

Now more than ever WVBT needs financial support from coalition partners and companies. **If your organization or company would like to help sustain the coalition's ongoing campaign or would like to get more information about West Virginians for Better Transportation, please send an email to info@keepwvmoving.org.** Someone would be happy to contact you.

For more information about West Virginians for Better Transportation, please go to www.keepwvmoving.org.

To opt out of this email system, please send your request to info@keepwvmoving.org.