

U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 19, 1992

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RAHALL IMPLORES DEMOCRATIC LEADERS FOR HIGHWAY HELP

BLUEFIELD, WV -- In an effort to promote job creation during the lingering recession, U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) has gone to House Speaker Tom Foley (D-WA) and urged him to support efforts underway to spur growth through accelerated highway project spending.

In a letter being sent to the House Democratic Leaders on Monday, Rahall will call for the elimination of state matching requirements for fiscal year 1992 and 1993. States would become automatically eligible for funds and could begin public works and mass transit projects immediately.

"Last December the President signed into law a highway bill that will bring \$1.3 billion to West Virginia, but as of April only 38 percent of the money had been obligated. That kind of spending helps no one and it certainly won't turn the economy around," said Rahall.

Rahall said the lagging economy is making it difficult for states to come up with matching funds, but only massive public works spending will help the economy to recover.

"It is a true Catch-22," said Rahall. "We cannot bring ourselves out of the recession until we start reinvesting in America, yet because of the recession, there is no money for states to put into projects."

The letter also suggests an effort should be made to quicken the pace of Highway Trust Fund spending by making monies available to states in five years instead of six.

Rahall, a senior Member of the Public Works Committee, was instrumental in the process last year to bring highway dollars to West Virginia. He was able to secure a number of special projects for southern West Virginia including: \$100 million for TOLSTA highway, \$14 million for the Williamson to Bluefield segment of the I-73 corridor (the Route 52 replacement project), and \$4.5 million for the Shawnee Parkway. Rahall also worked with Senator Byrd to lock in \$50 million for the Coalfields Expressway. Special projects are already exempt from funding matches.

"You have heard the highway bill referred to as a 'vital springboard' toward job growth in West Virginia and greater economic competitiveness in America," said Rahall. "Well, this recession has left that springboard a little flat and we have suggested a straightforward way to give it back some of its bounce."

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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1503

June 8, 1992

Congressman Nick Joe Rahall, II
Rayburn House Office Building
Room 2104
Washington, DC 20515

circulate this for sig. NJR on 6-12-92
Nicky, Read the law

Dear Congressman Rahall:

The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance in encouraging the House Democratic Leadership to develop an Urban Aid/Jobs Legislative Package for this year. Last week's announcement that the unemployment rate is at a ten year high reinforces the fact that our country is still in a recession, and we need to create jobs this year.

✓ Last year, Congress approved the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. This legislation was hailed as the jobs bill of 1991 and 1992, and as part of that legislation, \$118.5 million was authorized for the I-73/74 Corridor: Tolsia Segment of U.S. Route 52 and the Route 52 Project of I-73/74 Corridor in your District.

Unfortunately, as a recent Wall Street Journal article pointed out, many of the jobs that were promised by ISTEA may not be created because state and local governments are unable to meet the match requirement to receive federal transportation funding, which means many of these projects may not be started, and jobs are not being created.

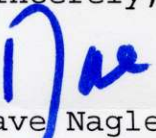
That is why I have been urging the Democratic leadership to (1) create an urban aid/jobs bill, and (2) as part of that legislation, include a waiver of the non-federal match requirement for FY92 and FY93. This waiver will allow our state and local governments to immediately create jobs and build those projects that are important for our District. And best of all, this match waiver proposal does not break the 1990 Budget Agreement.

In addition, I have suggested that the next Congress be allowed to vote on accelerating the spending of the 1991 ISTEA from six years to five years. Accelerating the transportation spending of the 1991 legislation will reinforce the commitment the Democrats in Congress made last year to rebuild our nation's infrastructure and prepare us for the economic challenges of the 21st Century.

Portions of this proposal have the support of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Governor's Association, American Road and Transportation Builders, Associated General Contractors and the Congressional Black Caucus.

It is time for the Democrats to create a jobs package that will truly create jobs in our Districts. I would like to send a letter to the Democratic Leadership urging them to create an urban aid/jobs bill with the match waiver provision by June 16. If you would like additional information, or to sign the letter, please contact Steve Brody at 5-3301.

Sincerely,


Dave Nagle
Member of Congress

DRN:sdb

June 18, 1992

The Honorable Tom Foley
Speaker
H-204, The Capitol
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Gephardt
Majority Leader
H148, The Capitol
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Bonior
Majority Whip
H107, The Capitol
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Chair, Democratic Caucus
1705 Longworth
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Democratic Leaders:

The Washington Post on June 17 editorialized "[i]t's been six weeks since the Los Angeles riots, and Congress has yet to pass even the 'dire emergency' supplemental appropriations bill Much less have the Democrats and the president agreed on the longer-term increase in urban aid that they also hastily promised at the time."

The Labor Department also recently reported that the unemployment rate nationwide is at its highest rate in nearly eight years.

If ever there is a time for the Democrats and Congress to act to develop a comprehensive jobs and urban aid package it is now.

Unfortunately, for those of us within the Democratic Caucus, we are still waiting for some effort by our Party to address the chronic recession and unemployment facing many of our constituents.

Following the debate last week on the balanced budget amendment, we are cognizant of the budget constraints and pressures that we face, but we are also cognizant of the needs of our constituents for jobs, and cognizant of the needs of our local communities and states for assistance to rebuild our local roads, bridges and highways.

There is a way to do both.

Last year, Congress approved the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. This legislation was hailed at the jobs bill of 1991 and 1992.

Unfortunately, as a recent Wall Street Journal article pointed out, many of the jobs that were promised by ISTEA may not be created because state and local governments are unable to meet the match requirement to receive federal transportation funding. This means that efforts to rebuild our nation's infrastructure may not be started, and jobs are not being created -- despite our promises last year.

Further, if any urban aid/jobs package is developed which funnels more funds into cities and states without recognizing the financial constraints that our local communities face, we, once again, are offering an "empty promise" to our constituents.

That is why we urge you to (1) create an urban aid/jobs bill, and (2) as part of that legislation, include a waiver of the non-federal match requirement for transportation funding for FY92 and FY93. This match waiver provision recognizes the financial constraints of our local communities and states, and allows them to immediately create jobs and build those projects which rebuild our crumbling infrastructure that are important for our Districts.

And best of all, this match waiver proposal does not break the 1990 Budget Agreement.

The House Public Works Committee, last year, highlighted the need to rebuild our nation's infrastructure: 60% of the miles of paved highway in the U.S. need some form of rehabilitation; 35% of the Interstate System will have outlived its useful life by 1995; 39% of the bridges are rated deficient, including one out of every four of the 270,000 Federal-aid Interstate, primary, secondary and urban bridges that carry 85% of the nation's traffic. It is estimated that within the next 13 years, traffic delays caused by inadequate roads will cost the nation \$50 billion a year in lost wages and wasted gasoline.

That is why we also urge that the next Congress be allowed to consider accelerating the spending of the 1991 ISTEA from six to five years. Accelerating the transportation spending of the 1991 will reinforce the commitment the Democrats in Congress made last year to rebuild our nation's infrastructure and prepare us for the economic challenges of the 21st Century.

During the past several months, leading economists have said that the best way to create jobs and to move this country out of the current economic recession, now in its 25th month, is to get money into the hands of the state and local governments for local infrastructure jobs. It is time for the Democrats and this Congress to create an urban aid/jobs bill that puts our constituents back to work.

The 1991 ISTEA was designed to create jobs in our District, to move this country out of the recession, and to rebuild our country's infrastructure to maintain our economic competitiveness.

We urge you to act immediately to address this urgent need and develop an urban aid/jobs package that includes the match waiver provision -- which meets the budget constraints -- and bring it to the House floor for consideration prior to the Democratic National Convention. Help us put our constituents back to work this year.

Sincerely,

Dave Nagle

Pete Stark

Jolene Unsoeld

George Hochbrueckner

William Coyne

Maxine Waters

Tom Sawyer

Kweisi Mfume

Marcy Kaptur

Nick Rahall

Charles Bennett

Jerry Costello

Barbara-Rose Collins

Eni F.H. Faleomavaega

Bill Richardson

Bob Traxler

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Gus Yatron

Joe Kolter

Carl Perkins

Jim Jontz

Rosa DeLauro

Jim Traficant

Matthew Martinez

Austin Murphy

Bob Clement

George Sangmeister