



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

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Chairman Inouye Calls for Immediate Action on Stimulus Package *Urges Bipartisan Approach to Solving Economic Crisis*

Washington, DC. – Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) delivered the following statement at today’s Full Committee hearing on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan.

“We are here today to mark up the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan, and to adopt the rules we will use to govern this Committee during the 111th Congress.

“Before we begin, I wish to take a moment to recognize and thank Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia. Senator Byrd has served on this Committee for a remarkable 50 years, the longest tenure of any Senator in the history of the Appropriations Committee. For the past 20 years, he has been either the Chairman or Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee.

“His staunch advocacy for this Committee, this Chamber, and the Constitution have made our nation a better place. Senator Byrd is not only a colleague, but also a good friend. So I thank him for his outstanding service to our country, to the people of West Virginia, and to the Senate. I know that he will continue to achieve great things for our country and the state that he loves so much.

“I would also like to welcome five new members to the Committee. We have added two Democrats, Senators Mark Pryor of Arkansas and Jon Tester of Montana. We also welcome three new Republicans to the Committee, Senators Susan Collins of Maine, George Voinovich of Ohio, and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska.

“I welcome each of you, and I hope your service on this Committee will be long and rewarding, though perhaps not quite as long as Senator Byrd’s. And in the case of Senator Voinovich, who I understand is retiring next year, may your service at least be rewarding.

“As the incoming Chairman, I intend to continue to lead this Committee in the bipartisan fashion that has been the rule for many years. Appropriations is a unique Committee, with unique responsibilities, and I believe that our nation is better served if we carry out our obligations in the spirit of cooperation.

“I know that Senator Cochran feels the same way on this issue, and I look forward to working with him as we move this nation forward and tackle the critical economic challenges we face.

“I believe we all support the central goals of the legislation before us:

- **Creating jobs.**
- **Rebuilding America’s infrastructure.**
- **Improving the education of our children.**
- **Moving toward energy independence and away from burning fossil fuels that add to global climate change.**
- **Improving our healthcare system, so all Americans can have access to quality treatment.**
- **And of course, lessening the burden that this crisis has brought to the most vulnerable among us.**

“While we share these goals, there may be honest disagreement over how best to achieve them. I look forward to an open and spirited debate, and I share President Obama’s philosophy that it does not matter where a good idea comes from, if it is an idea that will help us meet our goals.

“I believe this bill represents a major step toward revitalizing our nation’s economy. Over the past two months more than one million jobs have been lost. We can expect similar job losses to continue if we fail to act. Therefore, the Committee recommends appropriations of \$365.6 billion to assist in the economic recovery of and reinvestment in America.

“The guiding principle behind this legislation is to use the resources of the Federal government as one means to reinvigorate the economic engine that is the United States economy. The most important thing to keep in mind is that the goal of this package is to find ways to stimulate the private sector through public sector spending.

“We have no interest in growing the federal bureaucracy, but rather we are focused on jump-starting necessary spending projects that can meet the goals outlined above in the near-term, that will create jobs as soon as possible, and that will help get this country back on track.

“We are going to create jobs now, but at the same time, we are going to improve our basic infrastructure so we will be better positioned for strong economic growth in the future.

“The funding provided here is targeted. It would address short term needs and is intended to be expended quickly. Investment in infrastructure by its nature is a one time investment. Increases for programs as varied as food stamps, loan guarantees, and education, for example, are being made available with the clear understanding that the level of resources provided in this measure are to respond to this crisis and will not be sustained in the future.

“With the large influx of dollars for federal spending, the Committee has taken steps to improve oversight of the funds in this bill. To this end, the Committee is recommending \$110 million to increase the resources of agency Inspectors General and the Government Accountability Office.

“In addition, the Committee has included legislative language to establish a new oversight board within the Executive Branch which will be charged with oversight of the funding provided in this bill.

“Our country is facing a grave economic crisis. It is imperative that the Federal government use all means available to address the problems. I believe that failure to act could lead to much greater deficits and economic problems for our nation for years to come. This measure is a very important step forward.”

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