



## U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

*PRESS RELEASE*

For Immediate Release: February 5, 2009  
Contact: Rob Blumenthal w/Inouye, 202-224-1010  
John Bray w/Inouye, 202-224-3751

### **Chairman Inouye Delivers Floor Statement on Value of Infrastructure Investments for America's Future**

Washington, DC. – Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) delivered the following statement today on the Senate floor during the debate on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

**“Mr. President, when we began this process in November, the Appropriations Committee worked with the incoming Administration and our partners in the House to identify the primary goals for legislation that would help America regain its financial footing.**

**“Based on those discussions, we identified one overwhelming priority – putting as many Americans as possible back to work as quickly as possible. We also identified two further fundamental priorities:**

- 1) Assisting the states so they would not face insurmountable budget crises that would in turn force significant layoffs at a time when they are facing unprecedented demand for services; and**
- 2) Making the right investments that will not simply create temporary jobs, but will repair and strengthen our physical and cyber infrastructure, so that this nation has the foundation it needs to enable strong economic growth for years to come.**

**“I have listened to the debate over the past two days and I fear that we are losing sight of the key goal. Several of my Republican colleagues have suggested that the measure pending before us will spend \$888 billion and produce 3.5 million jobs, so that each job created costs \$255,000.**

**“However, they don’t take into consideration how investments in roads, bridges, railroads and other mass transit systems will actually cut back on one of the most wasteful expenses that Americans deal with each and every day - traffic congestion.**

**“According to the Texas Transportation Institute, ‘Gridlock costs the average peak period traveler almost 40 hours a year in travel delay, and costs the United States more than \$78 billion each year. At a time when fuel is increasingly costly, traffic jams are wasting 2.9 billion gallons of gas every year.’**

**“Also, it is important to remember that the cost of labor when it comes to construction projects like roads and bridges is, I believe, around 15 percent. The rest of the budget goes for supplies like steel and concrete, the costs of acquiring rights-of-way, the drafting of**

plans, and of course, the costs of necessary planning and environmental impact studies.

“Another form of construction contained in this bill is sewer repairs. Let me give you a specific example. This bill recommends \$125 million, to be matched at 100 percent with local funds from ratepayers, to continue implementation of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority Long-term Control Plan.

“The Water and Sewer Authority has identified up to 40 specific near-term activities that would create more than 250 jobs. Under the logic that is being used by some of the opponents of this bill, this would equate to some \$500,000 per job. This is terribly misleading. What about the costs of tunneling, the cost of the pipes, the cost for all of the heavy equipment, insurance costs, and many more, I am sure.

“With due respect to those who oppose this bill, the cost of a construction job is not the cost of labor. If we are to have an open and honest debate on the merits of this legislation, let us at least start with the facts.

“Now, our objective here is not to create make-work jobs for one year having people count paperclips. Our goal is to create real jobs that will last for many years and that will in turn create more jobs. Our goal is to ensure that America will remain the strongest economy in the world for many years to come.

“While our short term tactic is to pass a bill that will have an immediate stimulative impact and help us through the current crisis, we must not lose sight of the fact that our short term tactics can have a long term impact – rebuilding our infrastructure and adapting to new technologies today that put us back on track to being competitive in the global economy for generations to come.

“Reinvesting in the infrastructure that underlies our nation - roads, mass transportation, sewers and sidewalks - is not glamorous, but this investment puts Americans to work building for the future.

“I stand by the original vision of this bill – create jobs, support our state and local governments, and invest in our basic infrastructure. These are the priorities that will ensure that America emerges from this crisis stronger and better able to compete in the global economy.

“During the past two days opponents of this bill have spoken about the primacy of tax cuts over all other policies, they have spoken of the need to cut spending on programs that create jobs now, good jobs, real jobs, jobs that preserve the environment, improve education and lead us toward true energy independence.

“And opponents of this bill have spoken about cutting programs that provide a lifeline to those who have been hit the hardest by this crisis.

“One thought comes to my mind. This bill is about change, and their opposition is about simply responding to the biggest crisis since the Great Depression with more of the same.

“Mr. President, more of the same hasn’t worked for the past several years. It is time to act, and to pass this bill.”