



News from the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II — Ranking Member

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STATEMENT OF NICK J. RAHALL, II, RANKING MEMBER COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE “STIMULUS STATUS: TWO YEARS AND COUNTING” MAY 4, 2011

Thank you, Chairman Mica, for holding this important hearing today to discuss the millions of American jobs that have been created or saved as a result of the Recovery Act.

This hearing is being billed as an opportunity to examine “oversight lapses” of the Recovery Act. I certainly would hope my good friends across the aisle haven’t already forgotten about the 19 oversight hearings held last Congress by this Committee on the Recovery Act alone.

On the other hand, probably the only things we have spent more time on this Congress is whether we are going to end Medicare as we know it, continue the ill conceived witch hunt for President Obama’s birth certificate or talk about the need for creating jobs while bringing a budget to the floor that destroys hundreds of thousands of American transportation jobs – jobs lost in every single state of the Union.

I am proud of the oversight work this Committee has conducted and I commend the Chairman for wanting to continue the extensive Recovery Act oversight work initiated under the leadership of former Chairman Jim Oberstar. This is the first oversight hearing on the Recovery Act this year – we have at least 18 more to go just to keep pace with Chairman Oberstar.

Whether measured by the millions of American jobs created or saved, the half billion dollars in unemployment benefits that have been avoided, or the tremendous progress that has been made to repair and rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, the transportation and infrastructure investments provided by the Recovery Act have been a success. They have helped stem the tide of job losses from the worst economic crisis facing the Nation since the Great Depression. These are investments in America’s future that are creating economic opportunities today.

The Recovery Act provided \$64 billion for transportation and infrastructure investments within this Committee’s jurisdiction. Federal agencies, States, and their local partners have obligated \$60.7 billion for 19,784 transportation and other infrastructure projects, representing 95 percent of the available funds. Across the Nation, work has begun on nearly all of these projects – work producing badly needed family-wage jobs today.

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Direct job creation from these projects has resulted in paychecks for thousands of Americans, which in turn prevents the need for those Americans to collect unemployment checks and instead allows them to pay taxes. For example, direct job creation from highway formula projects alone has resulted in payroll expenditures of \$2.8 billion. Using this data, we calculate that \$543 million in unemployment checks have been avoided as a result of this direct job creation. Furthermore, these direct jobs have caused nearly \$571 million to be paid in Federal taxes.

Is the unemployment rate still too high? Absolutely. Do we have more work to do to create more American jobs? You bet. But, would we be worse off today without the Recovery Act? Without a doubt.

I will close by thanking today's witnesses. I look forward to hearing your testimony and learning how we can build upon the success of the Recovery Act and continue to put Americans back to work.

We must grow past ideological differences and work together to keep America's economy on the road to recovery. The price of not investing in America's future is simply too high.