

WASHINGTON, DC, November 24 - In order to stimulate the economy and meet pressing infrastructure needs, the Vermont congressional delegation is seeking to waive the state and local match requirement for all federally-funded highway, transit and rail projects through September 2009.

The move would give Vermont and other states facing tight budgets a much-needed boost to improve roads and bridges, support public transit agencies and upgrade rail lines at no additional cost to the federal government.

Transportation officials have reported that because of growing budget deficits at the state and local level, many ready-to-go projects simply cannot move forward without untying the strings of the required match. Under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act, states are typically required to meet a 10 or 20 percent match for federally funded projects.

By waiving the match requirements, states and municipalities will be able to continue upgrading the nation's crumbling infrastructure while stimulating the economy and quickly creating new jobs. Sens. Patrick Leahy and Bernie Sanders and Rep. Peter Welch are drafting legislation they plan to introduce in the coming weeks that would grant this waiver through September 2009.

Leahy said, "It's clear that Vermont's infrastructure has suffered due to limited state funding. By allowing the free flow of federal funds to these projects, Vermonters will see improved roads and bridges, as well as additional jobs. With tight state budgets all over the country, Congress has a responsibility to enable the completion of projects that are already lined up and ready to go."

Sanders said, "Any economic recovery package should first improve our crumbling infrastructure by improving our roads, bridges and public transportation. The elimination of the state and local match would complement increased funding and heighten the effectiveness of economic recovery efforts. Our nation's state and local governments are currently taking in far less revenue due to falling property values and reduced sales tax revenues, and also face higher borrowing costs in credit markets. These cities and towns are on the front line of our economic crisis and they would be the first to benefit from reduced matching requirements."

Welch said, "Vermont's growing transportation budget shortfalls and lengthening project

## **Vermont delegation seeks to stimulate economy with transportation waiver**

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backlogs are bad news for our state's economy and worse news for the safety of its drivers. As our roads and bridges crumble and our economy falters, we must work hard to find common-sense solutions to both problems. This no-cost waiver is a solid first step on our road to recovery."