

WASHINGTON, DC, December 10 - The Vermont congressional delegation introduced legislation today that would waive the state and local match requirement for all federally-funded highway, transit and rail projects through September 2009.

The legislation is intended to stimulate the economy and create jobs by jump-starting projects stalled by state budget deficits. At the same time, it would immediately improve Vermont's and the nation's crumbling transportation infrastructure.

"In these tough economic times, we must look for creative ways to put Vermonters back to work while ensuring our state's needs are met. This bill does just that," Sen. Patrick Leahy, Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Peter Welch said. "We cannot afford to allow Vermont's roads and bridges to continue to crumble - nor can we afford to allow more jobs to disappear."

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. This bill would waive that match - usually 10 to 20 percent of the total cost - and allow those projects to move forward.

Rep. Welch introduced the bill in the House today, while Sen. Sanders and Sen. Leahy introduced companion legislation in the Senate.