

## **Funds For Vermont's Transportation Damage From Irene And From Spring Floods; Leahy-Authored Cost-Waivers Mean Additional \$25 million For Vermont**

Senator Patrick Leahy (D), Senator Bernie Sanders (I) and Congressman Peter Welch (D) on Wednesday announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation is releasing \$134.6 million in emergency funds to help Vermont rebuild and repair roads and bridges destroyed or damaged by Tropical Storm Irene and in last spring's flooding. The total includes \$125,651,814 for costs associated with Irene and \$8,975,130 for costs associated with the spring floods.

The funding is part of \$1.662 billion in new emergency relief funding approved by Congress, signed into law by President Obama in November and released Wednesday by U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. There could be further installments of emergency federal road repair aid as repair work continues.

Leahy's work as a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and of its transportation subcommittee, which oversees funding for this and other transportation programs, was instrumental both in adding the additional emergency aid to fill the depleted coffers of the federal emergency transportation fund, and in securing several cost-waiver provisions that net Vermont an additional \$25 million in Wednesday's grant release. These crucial waivers allow Vermont to be reimbursed for more than the current \$100 million per-state limit on federal emergency highway repair funds, and to be reimbursed 100 percent for emergency repairs beyond the current limit of 180 days. Sanders strongly supported the Leahy provisions in the Senate and Welch ensured they were adopted in the House.

Leahy said, "These funds are a cornerstone of Vermont's recovery. Rebuilding our bruised and broken roads and bridges after this year's record flooding remains our most urgent recovery priority. We appreciate Secretary LaHood's continued support of Vermont's rebuilding efforts. Now that we have replenished this depleted emergency transportation fund and enacted key cost waivers that Vermont needs, Vermont properly and promptly is being reimbursed for this essential repair work."

Sanders, a member of the transportation subcommittee of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said, "We are one nation. When disaster strikes anywhere in our country, we come together to provide the support that communities need in order to rebuild. I thank

Secretary LaHood for his great help and support to Vermont as we repair the damage from last year's devastating floods."

Welch said, "Vermonters suffered through some of the most severe flooding on record last year. They responded with characteristic hard work and a willingness to help others. Now the federal government is doing its part. These funds are essential to the ongoing effort to restore Vermont's transportation infrastructure. I appreciate Secretary LaHood's strong support for Vermont's full recovery."