

As a member of the [House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee](#), I know the importance of having a robust transportation system that creates livable communities and gives citizens and businesses the ability to move about the country with ease. And, as we continue to recover from the worst recession since the Great Depression, I know that investments in our transportation system can create jobs right away, while also helping to foster long-term economic growth.

Today, our aging system of highways, air transportation and rail lines is hindering our economic growth. Our highways are clogged with traffic, costing us billions in lost productivity and wasted fuel. Our airports are choked with increased loads and our rail development has been neglected for far too long. The vitality of our regional economy commands greater mobility that's more efficient, safer and meets the needs of our 21st century commerce. As southern Minnesota seeks to lead in the clean energy economy, we need a transport system that allow us to move heavy components like wind blades and tanker cars of ethanol farther and faster than ever before.

A New Surface Transportation Bill

With the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Congress approved much needed funding to improve our crumbling infrastructure and put people back to work. But we need a longer term investment in our transportation system to meet the needs of the future. The current Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) legislation, which authorizes most federal transportation programs, expired on September 30th of 2009.

I have been working hard with my colleagues in the House to push for a robust, visionary and efficient transportation bill that meets the needs of the future and makes dramatic improvements to roads, bridges, railroads and other forms of transportation across the country and changes the way we fund transportation projects to ensure that every transportation project is transparent and accountable for achieving strict goals and outcomes.

Although the U.S. Senate and the White House differ from the House on when they would like to actually enact this long-term transportation bill, it is clear that Congress will move forward with this legislation at some point over the next six to eighteen months. I strongly support passing this legislation as quickly as possible.

As a part of the debate on this legislation, I've led the effort in the House of Representatives to give rural communities and small towns a say in how their transportation dollars are spent, in conjunction with state Departments of Transportation, like MnDOT in Minnesota. I want to make sure that state governments, who often have the final say in how federal transportation dollars are spent, are working closely with officials in small towns and rural communities.

In preparation for crafting a new surface transportation authorization, the [House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure](#) allowed Members of Congress the opportunity to submit High Priority Projects to the Committee for consideration and possible inclusion in the final bill.

The High Priority Project process my office employed was open and transparent. The process that I used to review the projects was rigorous to ensure that the projects requested would create jobs and help transform our region's transportation infrastructure to meet future demands. All projects were requested by local officials and all the projects that I forwarded for the Committee's consideration were placed on my website for the public to review.

For a list of the high priority projects I requested, please [click here](#) .

I also requested authorization for reimbursement for the City of Goodview's water filtration plant and to allow the Army Corps of Engineers to certify the levee in North Mankato in the Water Resources Development Act of 2010 currently being considered in the House of Representatives.