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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SPEIER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 8, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JACKIE SPEIER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 25 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

A GREEN LIGHT FOR THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, this is one of those rare occasions where Congress can put everything together for a holiday gift for Americans. People in this city and across the country are obsessed with the concern to create jobs. It is appropriate and imperative that we do so. All the objective evidence suggested that the economic recovery package made a huge difference, but not enough.

NOTICE

If the 111th Congress, 1st Session, adjourns sine die on or before December 23, 2009, a final issue of the *Congressional Record* for the 111th Congress, 1st Session, will be published on Thursday, December 31, 2009, to permit Members to insert statements.

All material for insertion must be signed by the Member and delivered to the respective offices of the Official Reporters of Debates (Room HT-59 or S-123 of the Capitol), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. through Wednesday, December 30. The final issue will be dated Thursday, December 31, 2009, and will be delivered on Monday, January 4, 2010.

None of the material printed in the final issue of the *Congressional Record* may contain subject matter, or relate to any event, that occurred after the sine die date.

Senators' statements should also be formatted according to the instructions at http://webster/secretary/cong_record.pdf, and submitted electronically, either on a disk to accompany the signed statement, or by e-mail to the Official Reporters of Debates at "Record@Sec.Senate.gov".

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By order of the Joint Committee on Printing.

CHARLES E. SCHUMER, *Chairman.*

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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As my friend and colleague Mr. DEFAZIO, from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, has documented, the economic recovery package had only 4 percent of its funds dedicated for infrastructure, but it created 25 percent of the jobs. Mr. OBERSTAR, and Subcommittee Chair DEFAZIO, have been working for 3 years on the reauthorization of the biggest infrastructure package that we will look at—the Surface Transportation Act. The evidence is that they are, literally, just weeks away from the opportunity to bring this legislation to the floor.

At the same time, we see the consensus building, at least on the Democratic side of the aisle and with the administration, that it is time to revisit efforts to revitalize the economy, that the original economic recovery package simply wasn't big enough considering the problems that we were facing. There is an opportunity to take unused TARP money, part of the hundreds of billions of dollars that was set aside, to help the financial sector recover after it brought our economy to, literally, the brink of collapse.

Well, we've seen at least that area stabilize. Some of the money is being repaid, and the balance is not likely to be needed for an economic emergency like we saw last year. So we should be able to take a significant portion of that unused TARP money and, rather than sending it to Wall Street, sending it instead to Main Street, perhaps to your street to be able to front-load the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Act to be able to have 6-year funding certainty.

This is a very important opportunity that we should not lose because, at a time when we are concerned about deficits in the Federal budget, there is a yawning deficit in the highway trust fund which simply is not going to be able to meet the current needs of America's highways and transit projects, let alone its future. At the same time, there is an opportunity for us to improve the Federal balance sheet. There is support for the concepts of having user fees that are available to be able to shore up those trust funds that fund infrastructure.

For instance, the administration has placed in its budget the reimposition of the Superfund tax—a tax on the polluters who created these toxic problems all across America, a tax that expired years ago. The previous folks who ran this place would not allow us even to consider its reenactment. Well, it's in the President's budget, which is one example of where a simple action—having polluters pay—will be able to have the economic activity of cleaning up Superfund sites while we are shoring up the Federal budget.

Madam Speaker, if we move forward with the reauthorization of the Transportation Act, if we deal with water infrastructure, if we beef up our economic recovery efforts, and reenact a Superfund tax, we will have an opportunity to invest in America's future

and to put millions of Americans back to work. Unlike other areas of expenditure, this is truly an investment in America's future, which will generate other economic activities and will help the long-term fiscal health of our Nation while we strengthen our families and our communities.

I hope there is a green light for floor time for the Transportation bill. I hope there is a commitment to front-load the Transportation bill with TARP money and that we can get a Transportation bill passed next month and on its way to the Senate so we can put America back to work.

PUT AMERICA BACK TO WORK AND REBUILD AMERICA'S DE- CREPIT INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, the President brought the jobs summit to a very unfortunate and, unfortunately, ill-informed close in his summary statement.

The President is skeptical about shovel-ready projects. He said the term "shovel-ready." Let's be honest. It doesn't always live up to its billing. Well, if he is talking about other than infrastructure, he is right.

The Department of Energy managed to commit a tiny fraction of the money in the stimulus bill, and that which they have committed has created thousands of jobs. Yeah. Unfortunately, they are jobs in China of making windmills that will be shipped to the United States of America. Not exactly what we had in mind.

Maybe it's the tax cuts all across America. People every week are grateful for their tax cuts. No. Actually, they don't know that they get a minuscule reduction in their withholdings, and that's what is supposed to rebuild our economy. There was seven times as much money for tax cuts as there was for transportation infrastructure.

Now let's examine the President's statement a little further. I think he is very, very ill-advised by a prejudiced group of economic advisers who, for some reason, were frightened by infrastructure at a young age, perhaps. Whatever the reason, they hate it—plain and simple—because the fact is, as the previous gentleman said, 4 percent of the funding, that which was spent and is already committed and is underway in infrastructure, has created 25 percent of the jobs. All of that money will be spent out by next summer. There are hundreds of billions of dollars in other programs that aren't being spent out so well, but the shovel-ready transportation infrastructure projects are going forward.

We had a report last week. There is \$49 billion more in bridge and highway projects. We have 160,000 bridges that need reconstruction across America. That's steel. That's concrete. That's construction jobs. That's engineering

work. There is no long lead time. There is no lengthy environmental review. We are replacing or rebuilding things that are already in place. In addition to that, there are many other road and highway projects of great merit. That can be committed within 120 days—\$49 billion. It could take place next construction season—\$16 billion in intermodal, port and other access issues.

Then perhaps this will get the attention out at the White House: \$20 billion in transit. We are killing people on our transit systems because of the outmoded, decrepit infrastructure we have. There is an \$80 billion backlog. When you begin to fill that backlog, what you can do within a day in some places, like the Chicago Transit Authority, which spent a quarter of \$1 billion in 30 days, which is all the money they got—they spent it in 30 days because they have a decrepit system. They ordered things that create a huge multiplier effect and jobs across the economy—transit vehicles, buses. Then people who make parts for buses have jobs. We have "buy America" provisions so the jobs aren't going to China like the DOE grants are. These are the kinds of investments we need to be making. These things work.

Now, why won't his advisers wake up and tell him the truth?

Most of the jobs, the real jobs—the private-sector jobs—that were created by this last so-called "stimulus," were in transportation infrastructure. The money has been successfully spent and obligated. We can give him those statistics. I defy them to go to any other part of that bill other than the money that kept teachers working and other things that helped the States or the tax cuts where the money has spent out at such a rapid rate.

So it's time to reorient the thinking down there on the economic team at the White House. If we want to put America back to work next year, we need to dedicate more funds for rebuilding our decrepit infrastructure across this country. Get the huge multiplier effect we get with that. We have a total of close to \$80 billion of projects ready to go in 120 days. These aren't just your resurfacing things like we saw last year. These are major projects—bridge replacements and major work on transit systems—that are ready to go, that are shovel-ready to go. No lie there.

I hope some of his advisers are listening, that they'll look at the facts and will send the President a corrective memo on these issues.

HEALTH CARE REFORM IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, this weekend, my Senator and constituent, Minority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL, made a statement on the