



The United States Conference of Mayors

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THE NATION'S MAYORS COMMEND OBERSTAR'S PLAN FOR METROPOLITAN MOBILITY

Washington, D.C. – Led by U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) President Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels, the nation's mayors today commended House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman James L. Oberstar's inclusion of a Metropolitan Mobility Program in his Blueprint for the Surface Transportation Authorization of 2009.

"The Conference's top priority in the next federal surface transportation authorization is the creation of a robust Metropolitan Mobility Program," said Mayor Nickels on the heels of his inauguration as spokesperson for the organization of U.S. mayors.

Referencing a report recently issued by the Conference titled ***American Recovery and Reinvestment: Surface Transportation and Infrastructure and The Role of Metro Areas***, Mayor Nickels continued, "Cities and their metro areas have been and continue to be short-changed by state departments of transportation. And federal stimulus infrastructure funds administered by state departments of transportation continue this practice."

Prepared by IHS Global Insight for the USCM, the report reveals that state departments of transportation have not allocated funds effectively to reduce congestion costs. Report data also shows that nation's largest 85 metro areas account for 86.6% of traffic congestion costs, but receive only 48.2% of state-approved funding. For example, the three most congested areas in the country -- Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago -- suffer from 26.5% of the nation's congestion costs, but receive only 6.3% of federal surface transportation funds allocated thus far by the states.

During his inaugural speech at the Conference's annual gathering, Mayor Nickels said, "For too long, the federal government has relied on cookie cutter formulas that don't produce the outcomes we all want. It is time to allocate funds in a way that most effectively reduces congestion in our nation's cities and targets transportation investments to centers of housing and employment."

USCM Transportation Committee Chair Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper echoed Nickels comments saying, "The next federal transportation bill must ensure that congested areas actually receive funding and can budget for transportation investments that compliment centers of housing and employment."

"As local and as metropolitan leaders, mayors must be empowered to decide transportation investments in their areas. We believe that a Metropolitan Mobility Program will help to get us there," Hickenlooper concluded.

Nickels added, "As Congress and the Administration look for funding for a long-term authorization of the transportation bill, the nation's mayors are pleased with U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray La Hood's statement that an eighteen-month reauthorization would focus more investments on metro areas and promote livability."

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.