

**STATEMENT OF  
THE HONORABLE JAMES L. OBERSTAR**

**BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION  
JANUARY 27, 2010**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Lungren, and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Committee on House Administration to discuss the budget of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

In the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, we were provided \$10,237,447 by the budget resolution. To date, we have allocated \$9,054,321, and we know of \$108,170 in outstanding obligations to be paid for out of our 2010 Funds.

I and my colleagues on the Committee take great pride in what we have accomplished with the funds that we have been provided. Our Committee, with 75 Members, is the largest Committee in Congress and has many important responsibilities. In the first session of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure moved 65 bills and resolutions through the full House. Key pieces of Committee legislation passed by the House and transmitted to the Senate include legislation that: reauthorizes the Federal Aviation Administration; strengthens airline safety and pilot training standards; authorizes

annual appropriations for the Coast Guard and end of year strength for military personnel, as well as addresses marine safety, Coast Guard management structure, acquisition reform, workforce development and cruise vessel safety; improves water quality investment; provides assistance to State and local governments to reduce damage caused by natural hazards through the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program; limits and prevents human exposure to polluted coastal recreation waters; and creates a National Women's History Museum.

Other important legislation moved through the House by the Committee includes extensions of authorizations for Federal surface transportation and aviation programs into 2010. The Committee also developed a blueprint for a six-year, \$500 billion surface transportation authorization bill. In addition, the Committee made significant contributions to H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act), H.R. 146, the Omnibus Land Management Act of 2009 and H.R. 2868, the Chemical and Water Security Act of 2009.

Oversight of the Recovery Act was and continues to be a high priority for the Committee. The Committee has held a total of 13 full Committee and subcommittee oversight hearings on the Recovery Act through the end of 2009, questioning 103 witnesses over a span of 54 hours. The Committee also collected

data from State and Federal agencies on the use of Recovery Act funds, published monthly reports on those figures, and notified States of their progress in distributing the funds.

Through the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress and now midway through the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee has held a total of 257 hearings in just three years, compared to 143 in the comparable three-year period of the 108th and 109th Congresses. In addition, the Committee held 36 markups, and had 210 bills and resolutions pass the House, of which 133 became Public Laws or concurrent and House resolutions.

In the second session of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, we have an ambitious schedule ahead of us. We expect to pass a major multi-year authorization to upgrade our nation's surface transportation programs; the \$286.3 billion surface transportation authorization bill enacted in 2005 expired in September 2009. We will also consider legislation to: reauthorize the Economic Development Administration, an agency that has been key in helping local communities through our current economic downturn; authorize major investments in our nation's water and wastewater infrastructure programs, as well as modify existing regional Clean Water programs; and reauthorize both the National Transportation Safety Board and the United States Coast Guard. We hope to complete work on major bills in aviation, coast guard and water

resources, which have passed the House and are awaiting Senate action and a conference.

To continue our record of productivity, we need to maintain our skilled and technically knowledgeable Committee staff. Most of our budget goes to fund this staff. In addition, our allocation provides for the Minority to receive 1/3 of the salary budget.

We anticipate that our expenses in 2011 will be greater than 2010. We have staff vacancies that need to be filled over the next few months. We will continue to monitor all Committee expenditures to ensure the proper use of taxpayer's money. You may be assured that we will take every opportunity to continue to save funds and return any unused funds back to the Treasury. In the future, we will make every effort to align future budget requests with actual Committee expenditures.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to present our Committee's progress in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. I would be pleased to answer any questions.