



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

James L. Oberstar
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

John L. Mica
Ranking Republican Member

David Heysfeld, Chief of Staff
Ward W. McCarragher, Chief Counsel

November 17, 2009

James W. Coon II, Republican Chief of Staff

The Honorable Haley Barbour
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 139
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Governor Barbour:

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure is committed to ensuring that funds provided pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-5) (Recovery Act) are invested quickly, efficiently, and in harmony with the job-creating purposes of the Act. Throughout development of the Recovery Act, we emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability and ensured that the transportation and infrastructure provisions are subject to the most rigorous transparency and accountability requirements of the Act.¹

Over the past nine months, many States have moved forward aggressively to use the funds provided under the Recovery Act for Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) projects to create and sustain family-wage jobs, contribute to our nation's long-term economic growth, and help the United States recover from the worst recession since the Great Depression.

Regrettably, Mississippi is not among these States. Based on the State progress reports submitted to the Committee in October 2009, Mississippi is falling far behind other States in putting to work its wastewater infrastructure Recovery Act funds. According to submissions received from all States and the District of Columbia, your State, along with five other States and the District of Columbia, ranks last of all States,² based on an analysis of the percentage of wastewater infrastructure Recovery Act funds put out to bid, under contract, and underway.³ As of September 30, Mississippi has put out to bid, signed contracts for, and begun construction on zero projects.

¹ See P.L. 111-5, § 1201. In addition to the statutory reporting requirements of the Recovery Act, the Committee has requested and received transparency and accountability information on implementation of the transportation and infrastructure provisions of the Recovery Act from Federal agencies, States, metropolitan planning organizations, and public transit agencies. Those recipients have reported regularly to the Committee.

² These rankings include the 50 States and the District of Columbia. The rankings do not include the Territories.

³ According to the State's submission, as of September 30, 2009, zero percent of Mississippi's Recovery Act funds for Clean Water SRF projects are out to bid, are under contract, or are underway. Nationally, 47.9 percent of Recovery Act funds for Clean Water SRF projects are out to bid, 30.2 percent of funds are under contract, and 23 percent of funds are underway.

The Honorable Haley Barbour

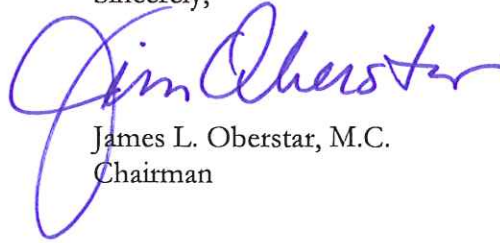
November 17, 2009

Page 2

We strongly urge you to refocus your efforts to implement the Recovery Act and use the available funds to create and sustain family-wage jobs. These jobs are critical to Mississippi's and the nation's long-term economic growth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Oberstar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Oberstar" clearly legible.

James L. Oberstar, M.C.
Chairman