



Betsy Markey

H.R. _____, THE "SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EARMARK RESCISSION, SAVINGS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT"

HON. REPRESENTATIVE BETSY MARKEY

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July __, 2010

Madam Speaker, today I rise to introduce the "Surface Transportation Earmark Rescission, Savings, and Accountability Act." This bill will eliminate a total of \$713 million in unobligated funding for 309 Member-designated projects contained in previous surface transportation authorizations.

The "Surface Transportation Earmark Rescission, Savings and Accountability Act" will clear the books of projects that will not go forward and save taxpayer money.

This bill will rescind all remaining earmarks from the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act (STURAA), which was signed into law in 1987, and the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which was signed into law in 1991. This rescission would be effective on December 31, 2010, and would eliminate 156 projects for a total of \$264 million in savings.

This bill will also rescind High Priority Project (HPP) designations contained in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21 Century (TEA 21) that have 90 percent of the original project amount remaining unobligated 12 years after this bill was signed into law in 1998. This rescission will become effective September 30, 2011, and would eliminate 152 projects totaling \$441 million.

In addition to eliminating these earmarks, this bill will rescind \$8.2 million in HPP program funds authorized under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) that were not allocated for any specific projects.

Madam Speaker, many of these unobligated balances are tied to projects that are either no longer viable, have not received the necessary matching funds from State or local entities, or projects that have been completed yet still contain funding balances that are no longer needed for the designated project.

Going forward, this bill requires the Secretary of Transportation to submit to the Congress an annual report identifying each project authorized under TEA 21 and SAFETEA-LU that contain inactive funding or that has been completed in the previous year. This will allow Congress to identify projects that are either already completed and have additional funding left over, or that are unlikely to move forward.

Eliminating excess funds that have remained unused by States for nearly 20 years is a common sense approach toward improving the management of federal funds.

As we confront rising budget deficits, reduced revenues caused by the recession, and an ongoing investment gap in transportation infrastructure, it is imperative that we take every step we can to more efficiently and effectively manage taxpayer dollars and stretch funding as far as possible.

Madam Speaker, the “Surface Transportation Earmark Rescission, Savings and Accountability Act” accomplishes just that by eliminating funding for earmarks that is not being utilized. I look forward to debating this important effort to pass fiscally responsible legislation. Thank you.