

BRUCE L. BRALEY
1ST DISTRICT, IOWA

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE

1019 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-2911
Fax (202) 225-6666

<http://www.house.gov/braley>

ENERGY AND
COMMERCE COMMITTEE
VICE-CHAIRMAN, OVERSIGHT
AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

POPULIST CAUCUS
CHAIRMAN

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2009

WATERLOO DISTRICT OFFICE

501 Sycamore St., Suite 610
Waterloo, IA 50703
Phone: (319) 287-3233
Fax: (319) 287-5104

DAVENPORT DISTRICT OFFICE

209 W. 4TH ST., SUITE 104
DAVENPORT, IA 52801
PHONE: (563) 323-5988
FAX: (563) 323-5231

DUBUQUE DISTRICT OFFICE

350 W. 6TH ST., SUITE 222
Dubuque, IA 52001
Phone: (563) 557-7789
Fax: (563) 557-1324

Chairman Jim Oberstar
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member John Mica
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Peter DeFazio
Subcommittee on Highways & Transit
B-370A Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member John Duncan
Subcommittee on Highways & Transit
B-375 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Oberstar, Ranking Member Mica, Chairman DeFazio, and
Ranking Member Duncan:

Thank you for your hard work and leadership on the Surface
Transportation Reauthorization bill. We write to encourage you to ensure that
the bill contains funding options for "mega-projects" – projects which are central
to American interstate commerce, but which are too large to receive adequate
assistance through most traditional highway grant programs.

One example of a project of this magnitude is the replacement of the
Interstate 74 Bridge over the Mississippi River between Bettendorf, IA and
Moline, IL. This project is integral to our nation's commerce, as it provides
redundancy for freight movement to Interstates 80 and 280, spans the Midwest,
and provides for the movement of people and freight to employment centers,
entertainment venues and commercial and industrial sites. However, the bridge
is severely over-capacity, and is in need of replacement.

We encourage you to include in the Surface Transportation
Reauthorization legislation a Department of Transportation grant program that
would allow for funding of projects of this magnitude. We request that the
program have the following criteria:

- Program is designed to only fund projects which have a total cost over
\$750 million;

- Projects are only funded that have a completed Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision, which demonstrates project readiness, and can ensure job-creation in the near-term;
- Projects must involve retrofitted structures that were not initially built for their current purpose and will meet current standards with project implementation, which is in the spirit of focusing resources on repairs to our current infrastructure, instead of funding new measures while we have current repairs to be made; and
- Program funds must only be used for construction costs, which will ensure that taxpayer funds are creating jobs.

We believe that with the right criteria, a “mega-projects” grant program can focus on necessary repairs to large projects, which are critical to interstate commerce, and which will create jobs in the near-term.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to working with you towards this goal. Please feel free to contact us if we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,


Rep. Bruce Braley


Rep. Phil Hare