

ening the food inspection system would not only better protect the public against an attack on the food supply, but it would also further reduce the risk of accidental outbreaks of food poisoning.

While these efforts have yet to overturn the recent decades' paradigm of budget control and cost cutting, they represent increasing recognition on Capitol Hill of the vital role government must play in developing and maintaining physical infrastructure. This recognition is leading some to the thought that promoting the general welfare is the same as providing for the common defense.

Senators: Infrastructure Spending Stimulus Needed

On Oct. 9, eleven members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee sent a letter to Senate leaders outlining programs that could be included in an economic stimulus package. Signers are: Committee Chairman Jim Jeffords (I-Vt.), Bob Smith (R-N.H.), Harry Reid (D-Nev.), John Warner (R-Va.), Bob Graham (D-Fla.), Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.), James Inhofe (R-Okla.), Jon Corzine (D-N.J.), Michael Crapo (R-Id.), Lincoln Chafee (R-R.I.), and Arlen Specter (R-Pa.). Excerpts of the letter follow:

As you develop an economic stimulus package, there are a number of programs within the jurisdiction of the . . . Committee which could be included in such a proposal. We make this request guided by the principles that a stimulus package should be targeted to address the needs of those affected by recent events, should increase near and long-term employment, and must carefully avoid large increases in deficit spending. We have identified five specific programmatic areas within our jurisdiction that are appropriate for inclusion and would abide by the principles articulated above:

1. *Disaster Unemployment Assistance.* Implemented by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Disaster Unemployment Assistance Program provides payments to those directly impacted by a disaster. It is critical to those affected by the recent attacks that this program be modified to ensure that statutory or administrative deadlines not operate to deny compensation. . . .

2. *Transportation Investment.* Investment in our nation's transportation infrastructure can play a critical role in our efforts to reinvigorate the economy. Through spending on roads, bridges, and other transportation capital, we create jobs and stimulate economic activity for both the near and mid-term. Infrastructure improvements enhance our communities, increase the value of property, and promote additional investment. With a useful life of many decades, transportation investments afford a continued and steady return.

. . . We are proposing a \$5 billion one-time increase of



Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), one of several Senators calling for massive investment in infrastructure as part of a stimulus spending package.

Federal highway obligation authority to states. The funds would be distributed under existing formulas and would generally be governed by existing program requirements. This investment would create roughly 75,000 jobs within the first year and an additional 100,000 jobs in the following year. Additional investment in our highways and bridges, together with increased funding of our transit and rail infrastructure, would yield a balanced transport system supporting economic growth, improved productivity, and more livable communities. . . .

4. *Flood Control, Navigation, Restoration and Shoreline Protection.* The [Army] Corps [of Engineers] . . . estimates that ongoing construction projects in these areas are artificially constrained by budgetary limitations. Without such constraints, it is estimated that \$1.2 billion could be expended in FY02 on current projects.

5. *Clean Water and Drinking Water Infrastructure.* Although Americans take clean, safe water for granted, our drinking and wastewater infrastructure is in disrepair throughout the nation, with literally billions of dollars in documented critical needs. This has been a consistent area of Committee attention and investigation over the last several years. The Environmental Protection Agency operates State Revolving Funds (SRF) for wastewater and drinking water to provide assistance to states and localities seeking to meet these needs. As increasingly more stringent Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act requirements have been instituted in recent years, however, a consensus has developed around the principle that the Federal government must do more to assist communities to meet these requirements. Accelerating improvements in the security of clean water and drinking water is also imperative.

. . . We recommend funding between \$1 and \$5 billion in Federal matching grants to states and municipalities for the purpose of upgrading this critical, but aging and failing infrastructure. . . . We believe that if carefully crafted to avoid long-term budget deficits, appropriate infrastructure investment can translate into a direct investment in our people, our communities, and our future as a nation.