



M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

September 18, 2009

Dear Chief Elected Official,

In keeping with the spirit of openness, transparency and accountability in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), I wanted to update you on our progress to date on ARRA transportation projects.

As you know, our Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) is administering \$455 million in ARRA funding for 33 transportation projects in three broad categories: highways and bridges, public transit and local “enhancements” such as greenways, bikeways, streetscapes and the like. In addition, we are working with the 15 regional planning organizations on more than 100 municipal projects valued at more than \$90 million.

While many states chose to fund simple (and short-term) asphalt paving jobs for their ARRA projects, the Connecticut Recovery Working Group went to great lengths to invest in more complex projects that would have the longest-term benefits for the greatest number of constituencies and that are geographically dispersed around the state (see attached map).

Recent figures cited in the national media show that half of all state ARRA spending has been on paving projects. While in Connecticut, only 10 percent of our ARRA dollars have been committed to paving. It is important to note that this ARRA funding is being supplemented by \$50 million this year in state funds under the DOT’s existing Vendor in Place (VIP) paving program.

Of the \$202 million we have received in ARRA funding for bridge and highway projects, \$140 million, or almost 70 percent, has been committed to two long-term projects – the rehabilitation of the 70-year-old Merritt Parkway in Fairfield and Trumbull, and the widening of Route 1 and the replacement of the Amtrak railroad bridge in Branford. These projects are under way and will last several years each. We believe that these projects are not only critical to maintaining the state’s transportation infrastructure but will also create long lasting construction jobs.

Much has been made of the slow pace of ARRA spending throughout the nation. The ARRA rules approved by Congress are strict and exacting, as they should be – but at the same time I know that has been a source of frustration. I am pleased with our progress so far. Already, 80 percent of our highway ARRA dollars are committed to projects that are under contract and work has begun. By the end of this construction season (November), 90 percent of our highway projects will be under way. To date, our “outlays” for ARRA projects – the actual bills that have been paid – total \$8.9 million. Already, more than 500 jobs have been created or sustained. Those are impressive numbers no matter how you look at them.

Much work remains to be done over the winter months, however, so that more projects – especially on the local level – are ready to go when the 2010 construction season begins next April.

I should also point out that just in the past week, we have submitted multiple new ARRA applications under the “TIGER” program totaling some \$329 million. These breakdown along the following lines: seven applications for rail freight projects totaling \$109 million; four applications for state projects in the amount of \$170.9 million; two applications for private developments totaling \$49 million.

I encourage you to visit the DOT’s website for up-to-the-minute project updates. (Click on the “Recovery Information” icon on the DOT’s home page, www.ct.gov/dot). I am also attaching a spreadsheet with the latest project information.

I know you join me in commending our DOT for its commitment to moving these projects along, putting people back to work and boosting Connecticut’s overall economy.

Thank you for your continued support. Please do not hesitate to contact our ARRA point people – Matt Fritz in my office (860 524-7309; matt.fritz@ct.gov) or Phil Scarrozzo at the DOT (860 594-2007; philip.scarrozzo@ct.gov) for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Jodi Rell". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

M. JODIRELL
Governor