



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

July 9, 2009

The Honorable Joseph D. Courtney
U. S. Representative, Second District
301 Water St.
Norwich CT 06360

Dear Congressman Courtney:

I want to take this opportunity to provide a comprehensive overview of activities associated with the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 here in Connecticut.

As you know, the Recovery Act provides a tremendous opportunity for Connecticut to help put its citizenry back to work, rebuild our communities, further energy efficiency and conservation initiatives, develop tomorrow's workforce today and position the state to grow through a stronger, more diversified economy. In the five months that have passed since President Barack Obama signed the Recovery Act, more than \$1 billion has already been committed to projects and initiatives in our great state. Recovery Act activity to date and into the future is being catalogue on the state's Recovery Act website – www.recovery.ct.gov – a resource we are using to keep our citizens apprised of stimulus developments.

Overall, Connecticut is expected to receive more than \$3 billion through formula-based programs. Recognizing the importance of moving these dollars as quickly as possible into the economy, collaborative efforts have been undertaken to reach decisions on projects, and to assemble the necessary applications to secure the formula-based funding.

Due to the focused approach of Connecticut's Recovery Working Group, we have been able to move most, if not all, of the statewide highway infrastructure and transit projects forward with many already out for bid and a number of them underway. This collaboration has also been evident in working to secure the formula-based funding with our state agencies working closely with their federal counterparts to navigate the application process involved with each of the Recovery Act programs.

There exist many more examples of collaboration that have contributed to a great deal of Recovery Act activity in your home state over the past five months. There have certainly been some challenges, some frustration, and a great deal of learning over this time, and we are sure to encounter more challenges in the months ahead: working to balance expectations with reality; complying with the reporting requirements; and securing as much funding for this state as possible.

I am sure, with your continued support, we will meet and overcome these challenges.

As I stated at the outset, I am writing to provide you with a comprehensive update on Recovery Act developments in Connecticut. With all of the activity these past five months, it can be, at times, difficult to keep up with Recovery Act activities – new opportunities and new developments unfold on a daily basis.

Some Connecticut Recovery Act highlights:

- Connecticut has received approval of its share (\$541 million) from the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund to foster the development of tomorrow's leaders through a strong K-12 educational system;
- Connecticut has obligated nearly all of the state's Highway and Bridge Infrastructure Investment funds to improve the state's current transportation network with projects underway or scheduled to be initiated in Enfield, Ashford, Trumbull, Old Saybrook, Rocky Hill, Branford and Seymour;
- Connecticut state agencies and universities have applied for more than 200 competitive grant opportunities; and
- Connecticut was one of the first states across the country to have its State Energy Program application approved that will help residents, businesses and communities reduce their dependence on fossil fuels and advance conservation and efficiency efforts. Initiatives in this area include exploring the deployment of geothermal and solar thermal technologies and making state buildings more energy efficient.

A comprehensive synopsis of Connecticut's pursuit of formula-based grants and competitive funding opportunities has been attached.

While our state agencies and universities have been aggressive in pursuing the competitive grant opportunities made available to date through the Recovery Act, these entities are not eligible applicants for every Recovery Act grant opportunity. As a result and in the interest of bringing back to Connecticut as many Recovery Act dollars as possible, my staff and agency representatives have been extremely active in helping non-profit organizations, commercial operations and businesses, and municipalities pursue funding opportunities available through the Recovery Act. We have attacked the pursuit of these funds through a variety of approaches that include conducting workshops, attending informational forums, providing technical assistance with grant applications and sending correspondence to eligible entities.

Over the last five months, my staff or representatives from state agencies have done the following:

- The Connecticut Clean Energy Fund conducted a forum in April on the many energy-related grant opportunities available to municipalities, businesses and residents.
- The Department of Transportation has held more than a dozen focused discussions with the regional planning agencies.
- The Office of Policy and Management has conducted 10 workshops for communities to assist with identifying projects and completing applications associated with the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant.

- The Office of Policy and Management and Department of Public Safety have conducted workshops on the Byrne JAG program and the Violence Against Women program.
- The Department of Education Commissioner and staff have conducted numerous workshops for school superintendents regarding the various education funding opportunities associated with the Recovery Act.
- Staff from my office met with state legislators for eight hours in March to walk them through the many aspects of the Recovery Act and answer their questions.
- Staff from my office presented an overview of the Recovery Act to General Assembly's Black and Latino Caucus.
- Staff from my office presented an overview of the Recovery Act to the Minority Construction Council.
- The DECD Commissioner presented an overview of the Recovery Act to the Connecticut Business and Industry Association.
- Staff from my office presented an overview of the Recovery Act at forums to help the state's non-profit community access Recovery Act funds.
- Staff from my office has met with community leaders from Norwich and Preston on potential funding opportunities for the former Norwich Hospital site.
- Staff from my office has presented an overview of the Recovery Act at forums sponsored by United Illuminating and Northeast Utilities.
- Staff from my office presented an overview of the Recovery Act to the Nonprofit Alliance of Northeast Connecticut.
- I have sent fire departments and municipal leaders information regarding the Fire Station Construction Program funding opportunity in May. Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Commissioner followed up with correspondence in June regarding this funding opportunity.
- I have sent letters to healthcare organizations, associations and educational institutions regarding the National Health Service Corps loan reimbursement opportunity.
- The Department of Environmental Protection assisted stakeholders in preparing applications for the Diesel Emission Reduction Act grant opportunity.
- The Department of Economic and Community Development has been working with the business community to pursue research and development grants and small business assistance funding.
- Staff from my office has met with hundreds of organizations, businesses and individuals to help them access Recovery Act funding opportunities. These organizations and businesses have included Common Cause, NAACP, Stepping Stones Museum, Hartford Stage, St. Mary's Hospital, Connecticut Conference of Churches and Comcast.
- Staff from my office has met with the leaders of the regional planning agencies to provide them with an overview of the Recovery Act.
- The Department of Public Utility Control has been keeping Connecticut's power companies apprised of energy-related funding opportunities including ones focused on Smart Grid technologies and renewable energy approaches.
- The Departments of Environmental Protection and Public Health worked with municipalities in developing revised priority lists for clean water and safe drinking water funding.

As you can see, Connecticut state agencies and representatives from my office have canvassed the state in an effort to make everyone aware of the many funding opportunities available through the Recovery Act. However, there are many more opportunities to come and every day

our approach to outreach evolves to ensure that we reach into as many communities and businesses as possible in order to ensure every funding opportunity available is being pursued.

At present, Connecticut is gearing up for a number of major funding initiatives. By the close of this week, Connecticut will have submitted a pre-application as the first step in securing funding for the New Haven to Springfield railway corridor project. This effort is part of a larger collaboration between the New England states to enhance mass transit options throughout the region. In addition, Connecticut is now preparing information as part of its effort to bring in funding for broadband initiatives across the state. In the months ahead, we expect to learn more about additional energy funding opportunities as well as resources to enhance and expand the exchange of health information.

While we have been tremendously busy with the Act's implementation, we also understand that there is still a great deal of work ahead. One of the foremost challenges on the horizon is compiling the state's report to the Office of Management and Budget on Recovery Act activities here in Connecticut. Although the deadline for the first report is not until October, Connecticut is already engaged in an effort to ensure full compliance with the responsibility and have the state serve as a national model of preparedness.

Implementation of the Recovery Act is a monumental task and collaboration has contributed greatly to the success Connecticut has already experienced. Over the next several months there will be a great deal of action in our communities as Recovery Act projects are initiated – rebuilding our roads, making our communities safer, employing our citizens, conserving energy and shaping tomorrow's future today.

I look forward to working with you in the weeks and months ahead toward the successful implementation of the Recovery Act. If you have any questions or suggestions contact either Mary Anne O'Neill or Matthew Fritz of my office at (860) 524-7316.

Sincerely,


M. Jodi Rell
Governor

Attachment