

90-Day Extension pushed by House Majority critically undermines vital transportation projects in New York; "We cannot rebuild our economy with short-term 90-day solutions."

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) today strongly criticized the House Majority for its failure to pass a long-term transportation and infrastructure bill that creates jobs, stimulates economic opportunity and addresses the critical needs of our nation's rapidly deteriorating infrastructure.

The Majority's decision to advance a 90 day "band-aid" measure, rather than consider the strongly bipartisan Senate Transportation bill will have broad, negative impact on transportation and infrastructure projects across the nation. Specifically, the Senate legislation includes \$3.165 billion for desperately needed highway and mass transit projects in New York, for fiscal year 2013.

"The House Majority is playing political games with the future of vital transportation projects and the millions of jobs they will provide for hardworking Americans," said Slaughter. "Their failure to gain the support of even their own Members, has put us in the untenable position of having to vote on a 90 day extension which has grave, long term consequences for construction projects across the nation. Transportation and infrastructure contractors are far less likely to employ workers with the uncertainty of a 90 day deadline looming, resulting in a shortened construction season. We cannot rebuild our economy with short-term 90 day solutions.

"Governor Cuomo's recently announced New York Works program – which is designed to invest in NY infrastructure while stimulating economic development, depends on a strong partnership with the federal government," said Slaughter. "This is certainly not the time to play politics – something that is apparent by the Senate's passage of its Transportation Bill by a vote of 74-22. By delaying passage of a long-term transportation solution, which provides stable, reliable funding for projects and creates greater certainty for public works contractors, the Majority is essentially taking food off of the tables of 113,000 of my fellow New Yorkers."

Criticism of the failure to arrive at a long-term solution has come from construction industry groups and transportation officials. The Association of General Contractors has engaged in a letter-writing campaign strongly urging the adoption of a multi-year extension, encouraging their

members to "contact your elected officials and urge them to pass a multi-year transportation reauthorization bill which will bring much needed certainty to the construction marketplace."

In addition, U.S. Transportation Secretary and former Republican Congressman Ray LaHood said last week, "We're right on the eve of the construction season. The spinoffs that come off a transportation bill will put people to work for years."

"This is the first partisan transportation bill since President Eisenhower was in the White House," said Slaughter. "What's at issue here is creating jobs. The transportation bill that's being held up in the House by the Majority supports 113,300 jobs in New York State alone. Creating jobs, repairing our roads and bridges and investing in our infrastructure have always been bipartisan goals and holding this bill up any longer puts all of that in undue jeopardy."

PUBLISHED MARCH 30, 2012