

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 17, 2012

**Obama Administration on Idle Earmark Projects: Use It or Lose It “We Can’t Wait”
Action Helps States Put People to Work, Improve Infrastructure**

WASHINGTON, DC – The Obama Administration today announced that it won’t allow infrastructure funds to sit idle as a result of stalled earmark projects at a time when hundreds of thousands of construction workers are looking for work. U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood is making over \$470 million in unspent earmarks immediately available to states for projects that will create jobs and help improve transportation across the country.

“My administration will continue to do everything we can to put Americans back to work,” said **President Barack Obama**. “We’re not going to let politics stand between construction workers and good jobs repairing our roads and bridges.”

“We are freeing up these funds so states can get down to the business of moving transportation projects forward and putting our friends and neighbors back to work,” said Secretary LaHood.

President Obama has vowed to veto any bill that comes to his desk with earmarks and would support legislation to permanently ban earmarks. But \$473 million in highway earmarks from FY2003-2006 appropriations acts remain unspent years later. Those acts contain provisions that authorize the Secretary to make the unused funds available for eligible surface transportation projects. Effective today, state departments of transportation will have the ability to use their unspent earmarked highway funds, some of which are nearly 10 years old, on any eligible highway, transit, passenger rail, or port project.

States must identify the projects they plan to use the funds for by October 1, and must obligate them by December 31, 2012.

“Particularly in these difficult fiscal times, states will be able to put these dollars to good use,” said Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez. “These funds will create jobs in the short term and help bring about what President Obama called ‘an America built to last.’”

To ensure that this funding is quickly put to good use to improve our nation's infrastructure, funds not obligated by the December 31 deadline will be proportionally redistributed in FY 2013 to states that met the deadline.

A list of available funds by state can be accessed:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/pressroom/redisfy0306earmarks.htm>

###

Jewel James

Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
202-456-4770 (office)

Stay connected with the White House:

<image001.png> <image002.png>

[Office of Intergovernmental Affairs](#)

Sign up for White House Updates [here!](#)