

Governor Rell: State to Jump Start Economic Recovery with Infrastructure Projects

*Bond Commission Expected To Approve \$525 Million
to Spur Job Creation With Connecticut Stimulus Package*

Governor M. Jodi Rell announced today that the state plans to bond approximately \$525 million for a variety of statewide infrastructure projects – a Connecticut Stimulus Package – intended to put hundreds of people to work, provide relief to cities and towns for school construction, bolster manufacturing and fill critical transportation and social service needs.

“With each passing day of this national recession, it becomes abundantly clear that Connecticut cannot wait for federal stimulus money to put our own economy back on track. But what we can do – and must do – is undertake this special effort to invest in those projects that will help jump start our recovery,” Governor Rell said. “Our Connecticut Stimulus Package includes money for major road and bridge repair, municipal reimbursement, commuter rail improvements, wastewater treatment and assistance for manufacturers.”

Governor Rell said the funds for the Connecticut Stimulus Package are expected to be approved by the State Bond Commission at its meeting on January 30.

“This bond agenda is all business – no frills, no earmarks. It addresses real and immediate needs for the entire state,” Governor Rell said.

The Governor said cities and towns will share in nearly \$310 million to reimburse them for local school construction. Those projects included expansion and renovation, special education facilities, vocational-agriculture centers and health and safety projects. In addition, \$10 million will be bonded to reimburse municipalities for local capital improvement projects (LOCIP).

“Municipalities are under tremendous financial burden and their leaders face the difficult decision of cutting services or raising taxes. This money will help ease some of those pressures,” the Governor said.

The Connecticut Stimulus Package will fund more than \$35 million in transportation projects that include road, bridge and commuter rail, an initiative that would create of hundreds of construction jobs. The highlights of the transportation plan are:

- \$20 million for foundation construction on the new Moses Wheeler Bridge on Interstate 95 between Stratford and Milford. The bridge carries 112,400 vehicles daily over the Housatonic River.
- \$13 million for signal upgrades and design for the New Haven rail line
- \$2.5 million for design, right of way for new West Haven rail station

Approximately \$135 million is expected to be approved for construction and upgrades for municipal wastewater and sewage treatment plants under the Clean Water Fund that provides low interest loans and grants. Clean Water projects expected to be funded in the upcoming bond agenda are in Norwalk, New Haven, Bridgeport, West Haven, Bolton, Torrington and the Metropolitan District Commission.

“These projects not only underscore our commitment to restoring the health and vitality of our state’s waterways, but serve the dual purpose of creating those jobs needed to improve and build these plants,” Governor Rell said.

The state also plans to add \$2 million to the Governor’s Small Manufacturers Competitiveness Fund. Eligible employers can receive up to \$200,000 for expansion, purchase of machinery and equipment, technical assistance and other services. Recent rounds of manufacturing loans have allowed companies to retain and create more than 300 jobs while leveraging \$5 million in private investment.

The Governor said the city of Bridgeport is in line to receive \$2 million to clean up a “brownfield” site that will bring new jobs to Connecticut’s largest city. The former Conco Medical site will be the future home of an elevator cab manufacturing plant, operated by Columbia Elevator Products, a New York-based company. The company plans to add up to 100 jobs over the next three years.

“The Conco site has great potential and is a prime example of how transforming a brownfield can lead to new jobs and economic growth,” Governor Rell said. “These are jobs that will support families, build neighborhoods and return revenue to the local and state economies.”

Other projects targeted for the Governor’s stimulus plan:

- \$7.7 million for infrastructure upgrades at the Groton Submarine Base
- \$2.8 million for New Haven’s River Street Development

- \$1.5 million loan for expansion of Greenwich financial firm Weeden & Co
- \$870,000 for expansion of affordable elderly housing in Somers
- \$135,000 for roof repairs of Waterbury's St. Vincent de Paul shelter
- \$84,000 for technology upgrades at state Department of Labor to expedite claims processing

“This Connecticut Stimulus Package will help on so many levels and sooner rather than later,” Governor Rell said. “We want people working again. It will accomplish that. We want the economy rolling again. This will give it a much needed push in the right direction.”