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Job Stimulus Package May Provide Opportunity for Historic Preservation Grants

House Democratic leaders began assembling proposals for a jobs stimulus package this week in an effort to jumpstart job creation and address the 10.2 percent unemployment rate across the country. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) have asked committee chairmen to submit ideas for a bill that could pass the House by its target adjournment date of December 18th. Although no final decisions have been made about the size and makeup of the stimulus, the House jobs package is almost certain to include extensions of expanded unemployment and health benefits that were part of the economic stimulus law (PL 111-5) enacted in February. Beyond that, Democrats are considering more funding for highway and other infrastructure projects they believe can create jobs as well as providing more aid to state governments facing budget shortfalls and offering new tax incentives, including one for businesses that add employees. Senate leaders also want to move a bill that focuses on jobs, but probably will not be able to act until early next year. Senate Finance Committee chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) said his staff is preparing a list of job-creating ideas in response to the House leadership's actions.

Preservationists are hopeful that any jobs stimulus package will include grants for historic preservation rehabilitation projects, which have been very successful in producing jobs quickly. Congress last enacted historic preservation grants for job creation back in 1983, providing \$25 million in grants through the State Historic Preservation Offices which, in turn, provided a \$42 million match and created a \$67 million jobs act program. According to the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, this program ended up creating over 14,000 full- and part-time jobs in 955 historic rehabilitation projects at a cost of \$6,693 per job.

Climate Change Bill Delayed Until Spring but New Coalition Proposes Massive Retrofit Program for Buildings

The Senate has decided to delay any further consideration of its climate change bill (S. 1733) until next spring at the earliest in order to finish health care reform. The bill, which passed out of the Environment and Public Works Committee, now appears to be dead and Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) is already pursuing an alternative draft bill with Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Joe Lieberman (I-CT) that could possibly garner 60 votes. Sens. Kerry, Graham and Lieberman have committed only to releasing a framework of their bill before the U.N. climate change conference next month in

REEP Provisions Providing Boosted Incentives for Historic Rehab in Senate Climate Change Bill Now Face Uncertainty with New Draft Bill

Copenhagen. In addition, it is not clear whether provisions boosting incentives for energy-efficiency retrofits for historic buildings (REEP), which were included in both the House and Senate climate change bills, will remain in any future draft of the Senate climate change bill. The Retrofit for Environmental and Energy Performance (REEP) provisions were developed by Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT) with the assistance of the National Trust and provide a 120% boost in incentives for energy-efficiency retrofits of historic buildings.

Rebuild America Proposal Calls for Retrofitting 50 Million Buildings by 2020 and Estimates a Windfall of 600,000 Jobs

In a related development, a coalition of business, labor and energy groups calling themselves Rebuilding America, announced an effort to urge Congress to include provisions in the climate bill -- or some other legislative measure -- that would put the country on a path to retrofitting 50 million buildings by 2020. The coalition includes groups such as the Center for American Progress, the AFL-CIO, the Consumer Federation of America and the Energy Future Coalition. The coalition has already sent a letter to every member of the Senate asking for inclusion of their proposal in some legislative package and are urging Congress to establish a stand-alone, national energy efficiency resource standard of 10 percent by 2020; direct at least one-third of utility allowances toward energy efficiency and increase the state allowance allocation for renewables and efficiency; support financing tools for energy efficiency; and establish provisions for accelerated depreciation and investment tax credits for a number of energy-efficient technologies and appliances. The coalition estimates that if their plan is fully implemented it could sustain more than 600,000 jobs and eliminate at least 42 million tons of carbon emissions annually.

The National Trust is reviewing the Rebuilding America retrofit proposal in conjunction with its ongoing research on embodied energy, life-cycle analysis, and energy efficiency retrofits for older and historic buildings.

Lawmakers Seek Consensus on Moving Forward with Highway Bill Reauthorization

Compromise in Senate on Short-Term Extension is Needed to Ensure Future Consensus on Highway Reauthorization

Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee chairwoman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) announced this week that Senate authorizers will begin work "immediately" on a multi-year surface transportation bill with the goal of finishing by next spring — if Congress moves quickly on a six-month extension. Growing pressure to fund long-term, job-creating infrastructure projects and a stalemate with the House — which wants a six-year, \$500 billion highway bill — have forced the reassessment in the Senate. The House has passed legislation (HR 3617) to extend the

**\$200 Billion
Reauthorization
Proposed to Allow
States To Begin
Highway
Construction
Projects in the
Spring But Defers
Consideration of
Larger
Reauthorization
Issues**

authorization only through December, with the aim of pressuring the Senate to take up a long-term highway bill. Supporters say states cannot plan long-term projects without knowing how much aid to expect. The Senate's bill would extend the current authorization through April and chairwoman Boxer has urged Transportation Department officials to persuade Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to help break the House-Senate impasse. Unfortunately, the Senate has been unable to win unanimous consent to take up its six-month extension. In the interim, highway funding is being sustained through a continuing resolution and current authorization levels through December 18th. The lack of any progress also prompted Sen. Boxer and EPW ranking member James Inhofe (R-OK) to join the chairmen and ranking members of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation and the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs panels in signing a letter this week urging the Senate leadership to file for cloture on the Senate extension bill this year.

However, on Thursday a proposal to front load \$200 billion for a two-year reauthorization was floated by Reps. Dan Mica (R-FL) and Peter DeFazio (D-OR) as a condition for supporting the Senate's interim extension to April. As outlined, the funding for the two-year authorization would be provided either from unused TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program) money or leftover stimulus funds with an eye towards completing a six-year reauthorization in the spring. The \$200 billion would be sufficient enough to allow states to begin their spring construction season without further delay and would need to be enacted by December or January at the latest to ensure the support of House Transportation and Infrastructure chairman James Oberstar (D-MN).

**Preservationists
Wary of Fast-Track
Consideration of
Highway Bill Which
May Bypass Historic
Preservation
Concerns and Issues**

The National Trust is closely monitoring the negotiations on the consideration of the highway bill to ensure that preservation issues such as Transportation Enhancements funding, Section 4(f) review and environmental streamlining, creating livable communities, and the impact of high-speed rail on downtown Main Streets are not overlooked in the effort to enact a long-term reauthorization.

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