



# Where's the Beef?

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Statement by FBT President Doug Callaway

Yesterday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an \$819 billion economic stimulus package.

With Florida's unemployment rate now exceeding 8% – it's highest level in 16 years – I was hopeful this bill would stimulate our economy and help put people back to work.

**Where's the Beef?** But when I learned that **only 7%** of the package's total spending would go for transportation – \$30 billion for roads & bridges, \$9 billion for public transit and \$1 billion for inter-city rail – I thought of the old Wendy's hamburger commercial where Clara Peller asked the obvious question: **"Where's the Beef?"**

**Seven Percent Solution?** Simply put, **MORE** transportation investments – not the 7% that Florida Congressman John Mica called "almost minuscule" – are what we need to really move Florida *forward* and *quickly* get us out of this recession.

**Short-Term AND Lasting Benefits!** Not only do transportation investments create thousands of jobs and boost our economy in the short-term, they also leave a legacy of infrastructure improvements that will increase our competitiveness for years to come.

**But Why?** Florida could receive \$1.5 billion for transportation from this bill, and dollars such as these would be welcomed and put to very good use in short order. But knowing that:

1. we create 28,000 jobs for every \$1 billion spent on transportation,
2. our economy benefits to the tune of \$5.60 for every \$1 invested,
3. Florida DOT's Work Program has already suffered a reduction of \$7.2 billion since November 2006, and
4. FDOT has nearly \$7 Billion, not just \$1.5 Billion, in ready-to-go projects

... the larger question remains – why does transportation infrastructure investment constitute only 7% of the House economic recovery package?

**Bringing a Knife to a Gun Fight?** In Florida's case, that's like leaving \$5.5 Billion in "unrealized" Economic Stimulus POTENTIAL on the table – which roughly translates into:

- o 168,000 jobs or more that won't be created to employ Floridians, and
- o a \$33 Billion boost to our state's ailing economy that won't be happening!

**Make Much Sense?** When we're in the worst economic condition since the Great Depression, does that really make much sense? We at FBT don't think so either!

**Floridians for Better Transportation (FBT)**

[www.bettertransportation.org](http://www.bettertransportation.org)

