

## **NCIT REPORT SAYS AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT SHOULD INCLUDE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**DENVER, CO, April 14, 2009** – The National Center for Intermodal Transportation at the University of Denver (NCIT) has concluded a Transportation Policy Paper following the signing of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The NCIT policy paper outlines critical transportation elements that should be included in the national economic recovery and infrastructure portion of the program.

The paper's author, Professor Patrick Sherry, who frequently testifies on transportation policies in Washington, D.C., said the president's bold economic recovery program addresses critical elements necessary to invigorate the economy, tackles energy issues, and enhances the crumbling infrastructure; but, to be completely successful, the policy paper suggests that the recovery program must treat the transportation portion of the program in the aggregate, not just on a modal basis.

"A national transportation system has a significant impact on jobs, the economy, and the environment as a whole," reports Dr. Sherry. "Ultimately, investment in the infrastructure will contribute to a stronger economic picture for the entire country; but in order to address both the need for an economic stimulus and to improve the overall transportation infrastructure, NCIT believes that a strategically formulated national transportation plan that includes an interconnected, intermodal approach to our transportation system should be included."

The NCIT Policy Paper recommends that the following components be included in this national transportation plan:

- **Inject Critically Needed Funds into the Economy to Create Long-Term Economic Competitiveness:** Funds should be committed to address the critical projects of a national transportation system, and the awarding of the funds should be guided by improving intermodal connectivity, reducing congestion, increasing economic competitiveness, decreasing the use of carbon fuels, and enhancing mobility, safety, and security.
- **Create a National Infrastructure Commission.** A commission would help prioritize projects of regional and national significance. Considerable work has already been done in terms of identifying bottlenecks, under-funded transportation initiatives, congestion points, and needed projects of regional and/or national significance.
- **Prioritize Projects:** Funds should be allocated on a priority basis and should include essential intermodal projects. Improved connections between various modes will provide for reduced congestion as well as increased modal efficiencies. This will decrease fuel consumption, reduce carbon emissions, and increase productivity, as well as reduce the operating costs of business and free-up time for quality-of-life enhancements for consumers and commuters.
- **Expand Mass Transportation:** Projects such as light rail and commuter rail will further reduce emissions, fuel consumption, and congestion. The states and municipalities have spoken in the last election and these are needs

that can be addressed quickly. An infusion of funds will accelerate the completion of *existing planned expansions* of the light rail system.

- **Enhance Public-Private Partnerships:** Additional transportation projects that have private partners should also be prioritized. These would be high value projects and should be supported either with funds or tax credits. They have most likely already passed some review that has determined their value.
- **Increase Access to Airports through Intermodal Connections:** Funding should be awarded to develop connections to airports via light rail and bus to "go the last mile."
- **Reduce Bottlenecks and Choke Points:** Funds should be designated to eliminate or reduce high congestion choke points. The Federal Highway Authority (FHWA) has already identified a list of key choke points throughout the nation.
- **Invest in Intelligent Transportation Systems Technologies:** Technological advances often drive significant economic development and improvements in efficiencies.
- **Fund Research and Award Scholarships:** Eliminate the disconnect that has emerged between transportation and academia by providing money to universities and community colleges that are attempting to train people to enter or advance in the transportation industry. Ensure that funds are holistic in nature and not earmarked to only certain areas of the transportation industry. Provide scholarships to eligible students who want to attend transportation programs.

"Each of these tenants represents a critical step toward developing a true national transportation system," says Sherry in summarizing the NCIT Transportation Policy Paper. "We sincerely hope that as the economic recovery and reinvestment program moves forward, it will address the funding needs of a comprehensive national transportation plan for the future."

#### **About ITI**

The Intermodal Transportation Institute at the University of Denver offers an Executive Masters Program that awards a Master of Science in Intermodal Transportation Management from the University of Denver. This graduate degree program prepares transportation industry managers for the increasingly complex, global business environment where knowledge of finance, quantitative processes, supply chain, law, and public policy issues as well as freight, passenger, and intermodal transportation operational strategies are critical management tools for success. For more information on the ITI Executive Masters Program call: 303-871-4702 or visit: [www.du.edu/transportation](http://www.du.edu/transportation).

#### **About NCIT**

The National Center for Intermodal Transportation (NCIT) is a partnership between the University of Denver and Mississippi State University. NCIT builds upon the activities of the Intermodal Transportation Institute (ITI) at the University of Denver and the activities of the centers with transportation focuses at Mississippi State University. NCIT is a part of the USDOT University Transportation Centers Program and was reauthorized under SAFETEA-LU.

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