

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny Hoyer announced today that the House of Representatives passed a bill which approved major funds to improve Prince George's County's transportation infrastructure. The funds were included in the Transportation Reauthorization bill which authorizes federal funding for transportation projects over the next six years.

Three projects were funded at the request of Congressman Hoyer that will benefit Prince George's County including construction of an interchange connecting Branch Avenue (MD 5), MD 373, and Brandywine Road; making upgrades to Indian Head Highway (MD 210); and funding for the rehabilitation of South Capitol Street and the Frederick Douglass Bridge.

The Senate passed the Transportation Reauthorization bill in February and the differences in the two bills must be worked out in a Conference Committee before the bill may become law.

"The Highway Bill passed in the House of Representatives today will deliver significant funds to make our roads safer by reducing congestion, making improvements to some of our region's most dangerous intersections, and ensuring that our roads can handle higher volumes of traffic," said Congressman Hoyer.

"I am pleased that I was able to secure funds to make critical improvements to Indian Head Highway and interchanges in Southern Prince George's County which will reduce congestion and make significant safety enhancements for our entire region.

"I have been a long time supporter of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative and I see the restoration of the South Capitol Gateway as a critical component of this initiative. The \$20 million included in this bill builds on the SCG Study that was released at the end of last year and the \$7 million that was appropriated for fiscal year 2004. It is another positive step forward in this major project which will improve access to Washington, DC for commuters and visitors from Maryland, and will increase the safety of residents, commuters and visitors as they travel into the city.

"In October of last year, a national study was released that reported that in comparison to other major American cities, the Washington region is doing poorly and the problem is getting worse - our traffic patterns are some of the most congested in the entire nation. It is clear that we must address this problem, and I believe the nearly \$35 million secured in this bill for high-priority

transportation projects in our region will address some of Prince George's County's major transportation infrastructure needs and make it easier to travel through our state," concluded Hoyer.

Congressman Hoyer secured funding for the following projects that will benefit Prince George's County:

New Interchange Connecting Branch Avenue (MD 5), MD 373, and Brandywine Road, \$10 million

Severe traffic congestion during peak hours at this intersection affects drivers in Southern Prince George's County, Southern Maryland and commuters from Washington, DC. And, traffic volume is only expected to rise as the area grows.

This funding will provide half of the funds necessary for the design and construction of an interchange connecting Branch Avenue (MD 5), MD 373, and Brandywine Road and the widening of Branch Avenue between Moore's Road and US 301. It will improve the safety of this dangerous intersection and will help to reduce traffic congestion in the entire region.

Federal funding will ensure that this project occurs since it has been on hold awaiting additional funding, and only thirty percent of the design has been completed. The design is expected take two years to complete and the construction is expected to take three years.

Indian Head Highway, MD 210, \$5 million

Indian Head Highway is a major regional commuting corridor and is one of the major roads that connects the Maryland suburbs with Washington, DC and surrounding counties.

The \$5 million approved in the Highway bill will make upgrades to Indian Head Highway to replace intersections from MD 228 to I-95/-495. The planned improvements involve the construction of interchanges at the first six intersections south of the Capital Beltway located at Old Fort Road North, Fort Washington Road, Swan Creek Road/Livingston Road, and Old Fort Road South. Additional "at-grade" improvements will be made at the remaining intersections.

These improvements will ensure that Indian Head Highway can also be expanded in the future if necessary to accommodate greater volumes of traffic as the region expands.

The planning of this project is almost 90% complete and the design approval has been anticipated for the summer of 2004.

Rehabilitation of South Capitol Street/Frederick Douglass Bridge, \$20 million

Because the freeway system proposed for the District of Columbia was never finished, South Capitol Street and the Southeast-Southwest Freeway are incomplete fragments of that transportation network. In addition, the Frederick Douglass Bridge, like many other of the District's bridges, is in poor shape. It has a sufficiency rating of 50, which means its structural adequacy, safety, serviceability, and function are seriously compromised.

This funding will rehabilitate the existing structure of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge to ensure the safety of the traveling public until the bridge is replaced. The bridge was built in 1941 and was last rehabilitated in 1976. This funding will be used for structural rehabilitation, environmental studies and safety improvements of South Capitol Street and the Frederick Douglass Bridge.

Congressman Hoyer secured \$500,000 in federal funds in fiscal year 2002 to conduct a study of the South Capitol Gateway and Corridor through his senior position on the House Appropriations Committee. This study was released at the end of last year and represents the next step forward in this major project by allowing officials to move forward with the next phase of the SCG Project plan.

Rep. Hoyer was also successful in securing \$7 million for the rehabilitation of South Capitol Street and the Frederick Douglass Bridge in the fiscal year 2004 bill that funds the U.S. Transportation Department. This funding is being used to rehabilitate the existing structure of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge to ensure the safety of the traveling public until the bridge is replaced.

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