

Washington, DC - Freshman Georgia Congressman John Barrow announced today that Georgia's 12th Congressional District is slated to receive \$34.6 million in federal funding for area transportation projects. The money is included in the final conference report of House Resolution 3, The Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU), which was released late this afternoon.

"This bill has been a long time coming," Barrow said. "It's a big win for the people of the 12th District -- a big step toward improving our region's transportation infrastructure, cutting down on congestion, and creating good paying jobs. These projects reflect a consensus we developed by working hand in hand with state and local transportation agencies to identify the District's needs and priorities."

In May, Rep. Barrow was appointed to the Transportation Conference Committee. Composed of selected members of the House and Senate, including Georgia Senator Johnny Isakson, the Committee is responsible for reconciling the differences between the House and Senate approved versions of the transportation bill. In the previous Congress, an agreement on the transportation bill was never reached.

"For almost two years, Congress failed to reach an agreement on this transportation bill," Barrow added. "During that time, a lot of big promises were made to folks back home, yet nothing was ever delivered. That's not the case any more. I'm proud of the \$34.6 million we're bringing home to east Georgia -- real money that's long overdue."

TEA-LU is part of the Transportation Reauthorization Act. This law is supposed to be renewed every six years to provide money for local road projects, public transit, interstates, highways, recreation projects, and state highway departments, but has been operating for almost two years on 11 temporary extensions because Congress has been unable to agree on a comprehensive renewal.

On Thursday evening, the bill was reported out of the Transportation Conference Committee with the unanimous support of the committee members. The House and Senate are expected to consider the bill later today, before adjourning for August recess. After passing both chambers, it will then head to President Bush's desk, where it is anticipated that he will sign it.

12th District projects funded in the bill include:

- \$5,000,000 to construct a frontage road in Warren County that will run parallel to I-20. The road will help create jobs by providing development opportunities for an industrial park.
- \$4,180,000 to purchase replacement buses and finance construction of new bus passenger facilities for the Chatham County Transit Authority.
- \$4,000,000 to widen SR 4 between Milledgeville Road and Government Street in Richmond County.
- \$4,000,000 to build the SR 307 overpass over the Port of Savannah rail line. The overpass will improve safety and traffic flow by connecting SR 307, a major trucking route to the Port of Savannah, to I-95, I-16, and I-516.
- \$4,000,000 to build a replacement for the Back River Bridge on US 17/SR 404. Replacing the aging bridge will help improve safety and reduce traffic congestion along a well-traveled trucking route that serves the Port of Savannah.
- \$3,200,000 for construction of the Effingham Parkway -- linking SR 119 to SR 30 and providing a north/south connector between Effingham County and Chatham County.
- \$1,856,000 to build an extension of the North Oconee River Greenway Trail, connecting the University of Georgia and Dudley Park in Clarke County.
- \$1,600,000 to construct a grade separated interchange of SR 10 at Peter Street and Olympic Drive in Athens.
- \$1,187,120 to help purchase new clean-diesel buses for the Athens Transit System.
- \$1,120,000 for the Athens-Clarke County Rail-Trail Project -- helping develop sections of abandoned rail corridors into a local bicycle/pedestrian transportation network.
- \$1,008,000 for Phase II construction of the Truman Linear Park Trail -- a 5.25 mile asphalt shared-use path running between Lake Mayer Park and Daffin Park in Chatham County.
- \$1,000,000 to widen SR 204/Abercorn Street from King George Boulevard to Rio Road in Savannah.
- \$573,496 to purchase paratransit vehicles for the rural public transportation systems throughout Georgia.
- \$334,400 to help purchase new clean-diesel buses for the Augusta Transit System.

In addition to these projects, Georgia's 12th Congressional District is also receiving an additional \$1.6 million for a Savannah Water Ferry project initiated by Rep. Jack Kingston and supported by Rep. Barrow on the Conference Committee. The money will fund an extension of the riverwalk on the west end of Savannah's Georgia International and Maritime Trade Center, as well as begin the rehabilitation of maritime Slip 3 intermodal public passenger dock. Once completed, the project will improve passenger access, expand room for a ferry maintenance facility, and better serve increasing demand for the Savannah Ferry.

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