



## THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA

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January 31, 2008

The Honorable Daniel Akaka  
United States Senate  
141 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Akaka:

During floor consideration today of the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR), John Thune (R-SD), Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Richard Shelby (R-AL) will offer an amendment to provide an additional \$5 billion in revenue for the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) to be spent on ready-to-go transportation projects to help stimulate the economy. I urge you to support the Wyden-Thune-Dodd-Shelby amendment.

While economic data show that public investment in infrastructure has remained relatively stable over the past year, these numbers do not tell the full story. Dramatic construction material cost inflation has reduced the purchasing power of public works dollars. Fewer contracts are going out to bid, which results in less work for contractors and fewer jobs for their employees. The impact from fewer contracts being bid is already being felt. Heavy and civil engineering construction employment peaked in January 2007 and has decreased steadily over the past 11 months. There was more than a 1.8 percent decrease in these jobs last year, equating to 18,000 construction employees out of work. This dangerous trend should not be allowed to continue unabated.

An infusion of federal transportation spending in the first quarter of this year would have a direct stimulus effect by putting more contractors and their employees back to work. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has identified 3,057 transportation projects in 47 states that are ready to start construction within 90 days. Please support the Wyden-Thune-Dodd-Shelby amendment to provide real economic stimulus.

Sincerely,

Stephen E. Sandherr