

FW: Small County Projects - Federal Stimulus Program

Betty Sprengel

Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2009 8:11 AM**To:** Charles Chapman

Charles, did you get on his list? Betty

From: Chris Doolin [mailto:cdoolin@nettally.com]**Sent:** Wednesday, February 25, 2009 5:18 PM**To:** FDOT - Stephanie Kopelousos**Cc:** 'Governor Charlie Crist'**Subject:** Small County Projects - Federal Stimulus Program

To - FDOT Secretary Stephanie Kopelousos
From - Chris Doolin
Re- Stimulus Funding for Small County Infrastructure Projects
Date - February 25, 2009

This e-mail is being sent on behalf of the members of Florida's Small County Coalition. Special attention is requested on this matter.

Small Counties Are Trying to Access Funding

Small counties in Florida are working to access funding from the Stimulus Program. As requested, they have worked directly with FDOT Districts to put forward their needs and are cognizant that the state has to get the money out quickly so that funds are not lost.

Statewide Analysis of Small County Projects Needed

During the past few days, counties are hearing back on what projects are eligible. Based on the feedback conveyed to me, many small counties and rural projects have been told that priority projects do not meet eligibility requirements. Would it be possible for FDOT to compile the projects submitted from the small counties - to look at which projects have been determined eligible and which ones have been deemed ineligible? This would be beneficial to see what funding will actually be targeted to our rural communities.

Critical Needs Are Being Deemed Ineligible

It is my understanding that some resurfacing projects are running into problems because do not meet federal/state standards regarding road width. Current federal standards require the travel lanes be a minimum of 11 feet wide. This means that in order to resurface a 20 foot road with stimulus funding the current road would have to be widen 2 feet. Many bridges that are in need of repair and replaced are being determined ineligible even though they are structurally obsolete and are in a deteriorated condition. Some projects that would have been eligible are being determined ineligible due to project bids being let before the date of the act even though work has not started.

Issue Needs To Be Addressed To Avoid Small Counties from being left out!

We want our rural communities to have as much access to federal stimulus funding as possible. Can FDOT request waivers or provide other technical assistance to posture these projects for funding? Will there be a federal "glitch" bill to address unanticipated and unnecessary burdensome requirements?

Can FDOT route some funds to a special program for these needs or set up a program to secure additional funding that will come from other states that could be allocated for this purpose.

At this point, there needs to be some special attention on this to assist small and rural counties in securing needed road/bridge funds. I look forward to working with you on this issue.

By copy of this email to the Florida Congressional Delegation and the Florida Legislators that represent small counties – we are asking for immediate help in addressing these problems in order for Florida's small counties to qualify for a meaningful share of Florida's federal stimulus money. This e-mail is also being sent to the members of the Small County Coalition.

Chris Doolin

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FW: Stimulus Funding Restrictions

Douglas Croley

Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2009 6:56 PM**To:** Bud Parmer**Cc:** Charles Chapman; Robert Presnell; cdoolin@nettally.com

FYI

Douglas M. Croley, Vice Chair
Gadsden County Commissioner - District Two

From: Reed, Harry [Harry.Reed@talgov.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2009 4:43 PM
To: josh.gifford@mail.house.gov
Cc: Douglas Croley
Subject: Fw: Stimulus Funding Restrictions

Josh

I believe this is the information you are looking for. We will be sending this information to the Florida DOT Secretary and the Federal Highway Administration and asking for some relief from these restrictions. We will copy the Congressman on the letter.

Call me on my cell if you have any questions.

From: Reed, Harry
To: cdoolin@nettally.com
Sent: Wed Feb 25 06:24:53 2009
Subject: Stimulus Funding Restrictions

In the Capital Region, stimulus funding restrictions have severely limited the use of these funds in addressing infrastructure needs (highways and bridges) in our rural counties. Eligibility is restricted to projects that are "shovel ready". This means that a project must have design complete, right-of-way (ROW) acquired, all permits obtained and have no outstanding issues with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). In addition, eligibility is limited to projects that meet requirements for "federal aid" according to the Federal Highway Administration. This eliminates many county roads because they are not on what is considered to be on the "federal aid system" or "federal aid eligible". Bridges are only eligible if they are considered to be "structurally deficient". This is determined by a rating system established by the state and federal departments of transportation. Having a weigh restriction or limitation on a bridge does not make it structurally deficient. Many of the rural bridges were built in the 1940's and 1950's and were not built to handle the larger heavier trucks of today.

While some rural highways/roads would be eligible to receive federal aid for resurfacing funding, they would have to be improved to current federal/state standards in order to be resurfaced using stimulus funding. Many of the rural county roads are 20 feet wide which means that travel lanes are only 10 feet wide. Current federal standards require the travel lanes be a minimum of 11 feet wide. This means that in order to resurface a 20 foot road with stimulus funding the current road would have to be widen 2 feet. This may require additional ROW which in turn may require additional clear zone area and require additional environmental mitigation in addition to having to complete a new set of design plans. With requirements to meet the new standards, a simple resurfacing project as outlined above is no longer considered to be "shovel ready".

Cost is also a factor. To meet the new standards, the cost of the resurfacing project increases significantly. A five miles resurfacing project for a 20 foot road may cost only \$500,000 but with improvements to meet new standards it would balloon to approximately \$2.5 million.

With these restrictions, rural counties like Gadsden County are very limited in what they can do with any stimulus funding they receive. About the only things that are eligible at this point are sidewalk construction and improvements and some small safety improvements.

I trust this provides you with a better understanding of the problems facing our rural counties in addressing their infrastructure needs with stimulus funding. Let me know if you need anything further.

Harry Reed
Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency
850-891-6815 - work
850-694-1440 - cell

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