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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

January 29, 2009

**Committee On Appropriations**  
Ranking Member, Agriculture Subcommittee  
Defense Subcommittee

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President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with the Republican Conference to discuss the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We agree that a bipartisan solution is the best way forward with a stimulus package of this size and gravity. This is an achievable goal.

There are a number of policies in this bill upon which we agree; however, major concerns regarding this legislation remain. As you know, the version passed in the House had minimal Republican input. Over 200 amendments were offered and only 11, most of which made minor changes, were ruled in order. In addition, the substantial growth of social government programs are not the type of job creation spending Americans envisioned.

Here are some ideas which I hope you will consider promoting as the bill moves through the legislative process.

**Taxes:** The inclusion of tax breaks in the measure is critical, but many could be directed in a manner that would be more beneficial to job creators and middle class families.

- Provide accelerated depreciation for all businesses so they may expense the costs of assets in the same year of procurement.
- Permanently repeal the required withdrawals at age 70½ from IRA and 401(k) retirement accounts.
- Increase the child tax credit from \$1,000 to \$5,000 without regard to income.
- Provide health insurance deductions for those who do not receive tax preferred, employer-sponsored coverage.
- Create a 20% deduction for small business expensing.
- Enhance and extend the \$7,500 homebuyer tax credit.

**Spending:** Infrastructure spending is a job creator; however, the bill includes too little spending for bridges, highways, and public works.

- Only 13% of this bill goes to transportation infrastructure, and only 7% to “shovel ready projects” in 2009. Less than half of the \$30 billion in highway construction funds would

be released into the economy over the next four years and less than \$4 billion in highway construction money would reach the economy by September 2010.

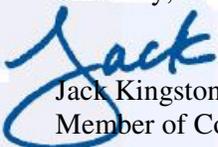
- Remove the 32 new federal government programs unless they are proven to create jobs. In addition, hearings on these programs are needed since their inclusion creates years of additional program funding. These 32 programs have had no expert testimony or committee hearings and should be fully vetted.
- An emergency economic stimulus bill is not the time and place to include non-job creating social programs. Programs such as National Endowment for the Arts, preparation for universal healthcare, NOAA, IDEA, equipment for the CDC, the Smithsonian Institution, Byrne JAG, and COPS should be handled in the regular budget and annual appropriations bills.

**Other Provisions:**

- Create a commission on unfunded mandates. Federal mandates placed on state and local governments siphon money from other priorities, such as infrastructure spending. Review of these high cost programs is essential to states' fiscal stability.
- Ensure that we do not reward bad budget behavior by bailing out states with large deficits. Instead, reward those states that made tough spending decisions in order to maintain fiscal responsibility. For example, Georgia has a larger population than New Jersey with a higher percent of poor citizens; however, Georgia spends \$10 billion less as a state government. Such a disparity is a reflection of fiscal discipline rather than austerity.
- The federal government must keep spending in check as well. The SAFE Commission (H.R. 3654 in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress) would create a BRAC-like commission on all federal government spending - entitlement and discretionary. This commission would identify government waste, program duplication, and items to be cut from future budgets. With a \$10.6 trillion national debt, action to stop the growth of wasteful federal spending is past due. The SAFE Commission should be included in H.R. 1 to ensure future economic stability.

Thank you again for meeting with us. I appreciate your willingness to address alternative policies and look forward to working with your Administration in the coming months to produce a viable solution for this economic crisis. In addition, I welcome any future opportunities to work together on the many other issues facing our Nation.

Sincerely,



Jack Kingston  
Member of Congress