



Washington, DC--Yesterday, Congressman Olver spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives to protest taking \$1 billion from a high-speed rail fund and transferring it to an account for river and coastal flooding repairs. The Congressman's remarks were recorded in the Congressional Record as follows:

Mr. OLVER. Madam Chairman, Title V of the Energy and Water bill that is before us today robs Peter to pay Paul.

Title V takes funds which were appropriated 2 1/2 years ago for transportation purposes and moves part of those funds to the Corps of Engineers in today's Energy and Water appropriations bill. Title V specifically rescinds all awarded but unobligated high-speed rail dollars from the Recovery and Reinvestment Act and moves those dollars to respond to the unprecedented flooding this spring in many States for work to be done as it is designed and executed by the Corps of Engineers.

Effectively this is a backhanded increase in allocation to the Energy and Water Subcommittee for this bill at the expense of transportation purposes.

I don't contend or even suggest that the Energy and Water bill is well-funded. In fact, the allocations for the Energy and Water Subcommittee and for the Transportation and HUD Subcommittee, of which I am the ranking member, are both totally inadequate. But I do object to killing projects in transportation that will create construction jobs in the severely depressed construction industry and provide a valuable transportation alternative in heavily congested corridors among our largest metropolitan areas all over the country. And I do absolutely support

making the repairs to flood control systems as quickly as they can be designed and built. That's an obligation.

In my 20 years, 10 1/2 years under Democratic Presidents, 9 1/2 years under Republican Presidents and under the control in the Congress of either party--because it switched back and forth in those 20 years--we have dealt with natural disasters on a bipartisan basis, on an emergency basis, every single year. Most famously, that includes, in September '05, the Katrina disaster which resulted in \$15 billion for recovery of New Orleans and the gulf coast on an emergency and on a totally bipartisan basis. But this section takes from projects planned, applied for and awarded but not yet obligated and kills those projects.

Roughly \$6 billion of the \$8 billion appropriated for intercity passenger rail and high-speed rail projects in the Recovery Act are already obligated, and half of those are already in construction. The Recovery Act itself allowed until the 30th of September of 2012, the end of the '12 fiscal year, to obligate those dollars. Of the roughly \$2 billion unobligated, 80 percent of those dollars arises from the single decision just 3 months ago of the Governor of Florida to refuse the \$1.6 billion previously applied for and awarded for a project to build true high-speed rail on a dedicated corridor between Orlando and Tampa.

Now, Orlando lies roughly equidistant from Jacksonville, Tampa and Miami. Those four, Jacksonville, Tampa, Miami and Orlando, are four of America's 40 largest metropolitan areas. All have over 1 1/2 million people, all are growing by between 15 and 30 percent, and they are among our fastest growing metropolitan areas. They represent a prime example of the opportunity that high-speed rail offers in carefully selected high-population corridors around the country to reduce congestion and expedite travel.

When that money was refused by Florida, the Federal Rail Administration re-awarded the \$1.6 billion to projects in other States, including, as examples, in the Northeast Corridor, which carries half of all intercity rail passengers in America every day, nearly \$800 million for work in that Northeast Corridor, and that work would bring the speed up to 160 miles per hour in parts of New Jersey, and the work would be done in New York and New Jersey. So that is \$800 million.

Mr. OLVER. Secondly, in the high-speed corridors that are based on Chicago as their hub, to go to Detroit, to go to St. Louis, to go to Indianapolis, to go to Milwaukee, for equipment that will allow those high-speed corridors to function better.

Thirdly, in projects on the west coast as well. All of those projects are jeopardized by this provision in this bill.