



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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February 18, 2009

TO: USCM Super Leadership

FROM: Tom Cochran,
CEO and Executive Director

SUBJECT: Senator Mark Begich Letter to
Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood

Attached herewith for your information is a letter Alaska Senator Mark Begich, former Mayor of Anchorage has sent to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood in which Senator Begich expresses concern over recent statements by the Secretary concerning the implementation of the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

I spoke with Secretary LaHood last Friday and on behalf of Conference President Diaz and other mayors, we are seeking a meeting to clarify this issue. Conference President Manny Diaz asked me to share this letter with you.

Attachment

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CEO and Executive Director:
TOM COCHRAN

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 10, 2009

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I commend you for your efforts as part of President Obama's team to generate public support for the economic recovery legislation under consideration in Congress. We agree these initiatives are sorely needed. But I take strong exception to your remarks, quoted by E&E news service on Feb. 5, 2009 and repeated on television last week, that most local governments "simply do not have the ability to do what we want to do."

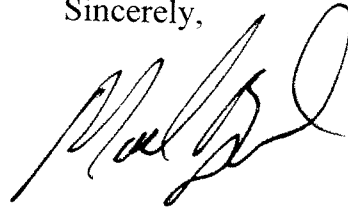
As the recent two-term mayor of Anchorage and an active participant in the U.S. Conference of Mayors, I believe America's mayors are perfectly positioned to do what President Obama wants us to do – reignite America's economy by investing in our nation's infrastructure. America's mayors have proven their ability to quickly and cost-effectively build roads, bridges, ports and other public facilities needed by local taxpayers and create millions of good jobs in the process.

We did exactly that in Anchorage during my nearly six years in office, where we invested nearly \$280 million in federal, state and local dollars into the busiest and most productive road-building effort in our city's history. These investments were made within just weeks or a few months of the receipt of funding and they created thousands of new jobs, with a minimum of the huge overhead and bureaucratic delays usually associated with state or federal projects. Certainly in your own hometown, Mayor Richard Daley has proven his ability to rapidly rebuild Chicago's infrastructure in the same way.

Secretary LaHood
February 10, 2009
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My colleagues in the Senate have purposely directed a significant portion of economic recovery funds to local governments for precisely these reasons – that local governments can move quickly, cost-effectively and address real needs identified by local residents. I urge you to recognize the value of a strong partnership with the nation's mayors in rebuilding America's economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Begich', written in a cursive style.

Mark Begich
Senator

CC: U.S. Conference of Mayors