



Contact
Caron Whitaker
202-215-3908
caron@americabikes.org

FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS REACHES NEW HIGH

America Bikes Coalition lauds increased investment; notes growth in bike commuting, but expresses concern about lack of safety spending

Washington, DC (10/22/2009) – Federal spending on bicycle and pedestrian projects totaled nearly \$1.2 billion in fiscal year 2009, according to an estimate released this week by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This unprecedented investment—more than double that of FY 2008—comes at a time when bicycle commuting is growing swiftly nationwide. New U.S. Census Bureau figures peg this growth at 43 percent since 2000, and 14 percent since 2007.

America Bikes, a coalition of eight national non-profit organizations, has analyzed this new data and issued comments, as the group intensifies its efforts to make sure the next federal transportation bill properly supports bicycling facilities and programs.

America Bikes notes that bicycle and pedestrian project funding grew in part because of new money provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which contributed \$405 million to job-rich, green infrastructure projects such as building and improving sidewalks, curb ramps, bike lanes and multi-use trails. Independent of this stimulus funding, more than \$780 million was invested in bike/ped efforts—an increase of 45 percent on FY 2008.

“State and local agencies are increasingly realizing that investing in improved conditions for bicycling and walking is good for their local economies, the environment, and for the overall quality of life,” said Andy Clarke, America Bikes board member and President of the League of American Bicyclists. “Broad-based support for bicycling has never been stronger—from the Administration, Congress, community and business leaders, health-care professionals, and individual citizens.”

Good News, But...

While America Bikes welcomes the increasing federal investment and growing participation in bicycling and walking, the Coalition cites ongoing concerns:

1. Last fall, America Bikes identified nearly \$3.8 billion in cost-effective “shovel-ready” bike-ped projects nationwide, but less than 20 percent of them have since been funded.

2. While 71 percent of Americans say they want to bike more, some state Departments of Transportation aren't getting the message and aren't spending available bike project money. The proof: State DOTs this year returned to the federal government more than TWICE the required sum of Transportation Enhancement fund rescissions. (Transportation Enhancements rank as the single largest category of federal funding for bike and pedestrian improvements.)

3. America Bikes continues to be concerned about the lack of federal investment in making bicycling and walking safer. While cyclists and pedestrians account for 13 percent of annual U.S. traffic fatalities, less than one half of one percent of federal Highway Safety Improvement Program is spent on bicycle and pedestrian projects.

4. During fiscal year 2009, about two percent of federal transportation funds were spent on bicycling and walking—a figure that continues to fall far short of the 10 percent of U.S. trips that are currently made on foot or by bike. America Bikes believes that additional investments in bicycling and walking will make these activities safer, more convenient, and more popular, and will help our nation reduce obesity, road congestion, air pollution and dependence on imported fuel.

Randy Neufeld, President of America Bikes, said, “The increased federal spending this year is a great first step, but it’s still a fraction of the investment that is appropriate given the increase in use and utility of bicycling. Most Americans support increased spending on bicycle lanes and paths.”

America Bikes is a coalition of leaders from the bicycling community advocating for positive outcomes for bicycling in the federal transportation bill. America Bikes Coalition members include: Adventure Cycling Association, Alliance for Biking and Walking, Bikes Belong, International Mountain Bicycling Association, League of American Bicyclists, National Center for Bicycling and Walking and the Rails to Trails Conservancy.

Contact:

Caron Whitaker, America Bikes
202-215-3908
caron@americabikes.org