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**Chairman Towns Works to Ensure Fairness in DOT Stimulus Contracts**  
***Wants Department to account for opportunities to competition for small, minority and disadvantaged businesses***

WASHINGTON – Chairman Edolphus “Ed” Towns (D-NY) is taking additional steps to ensure that minority and small businesses have fair access to compete for transportation-related contracts under the Recovery Act. According to recent reports, small and minority owned businesses are inadequately represented in Recovery Act awards by state transportation agencies. Chairman Towns expressed his concern today to Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Ray LaHood about the Department’s efforts to ensure that small, disadvantaged businesses are adequately represented in Recovery Act contracts.

“Supporting small and minority owned businesses is a critical part of the Recovery Act’s mission to preserve and create jobs,” said Chairman Towns. “To meet that goal, these businesses, like so many in my district, must be able to compete for transportation contracts.”

In a letter to Secretary LaHood, Chairman Towns requested that DOT provide the Committee with a list of all highway construction contracts awarded by state transportation agencies through the Recovery Act including the dollar amount for each contract awarded. The Chairman also requested that DOT indicate which contracts or subcontracts were awarded to small businesses, Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDBs) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) on the list, including the dollar amounts.

Since the Recovery Act was signed into law last year by President Obama, Chairman Towns has worked successfully with Secretary LaHood to improve the delivery of stimulus funds to areas hit hardest by the economic recession and to address issues related to small business contracting.

Last year, Chairman Towns met with Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to discuss the lack of stimulus projects awarded to economically distressed areas (EDAs), and to request that project funding for EDAs be appropriately prioritized and awarded throughout the nation. In October 2009, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued new guidance that fulfills the

purpose of the Recovery Act by preserving and creating jobs, as well as promoting economic recovery in communities most impacted by the recession.

Chairman Towns announced plans to conduct vigorous oversight of the Recovery Act earlier in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. He has held several hearings to examine the implementation of the Recovery Act, introduced legislation to help state auditors meet the Recovery Act's accountability standards and, in addition to working with Secretary LaHood, he has worked with Vice President Joe Biden to improve the programs main transparency tool, Recovery.gov.

"While recent economic reports show that our economy is heading in the right direction, far too many Americans are still out of work and struggling to make ends meet," said Chairman Towns. "I will continue working with Secretary LaHood to make sure we rebuild our economy in a way that works for all Americans, and that small and minority owned businesses play a crucial role in rebuilding our nation's infrastructure."

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### **Documents and Links**

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[Letter from Chairman Edolphus Towns to Secretary Raymond LaHood](#)