

Loebsack, Schilling Continue Push for the I-74 Bridge

Written by Joe Hand
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Washington, D.C. – Congressmen Dave Loebsack (IA-02) and Bobby Schilling (IL-17) today sent letters to United States Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, and Iowa Governor Terry Branstad urging them to use unspent highway funds to advance the Quad Cities' I-74 Bridge. [According to the Federal Highway Administration](#) , \$6,931,453.04 in unspent highway funds could be made available to the state of Illinois, and \$2,330,683.79 could be made available to the state of Iowa.

On Friday August 17, Secretary LaHood announced that the Administration is making this money available for states to create jobs and improve crumbling roads and bridges. By October 1, states must identify projects on which they intend to use the funds. The U.S. Department of Transportation will have to approve the projects before states can move forward.

“We specifically support the inclusion of I-74 in the announced plan by the Administration to use unspent funds to help move transportation projects forward in each state,” **the Congressmen wrote.**

“This bridge fits the important criteria of fixing our crumbling infrastructure, creating jobs and supporting our economic recovery, and we encourage you to include the I-74 Bridge in this plan for funds in each state that will not be used for their original purpose.”

Secretary LaHood joined the Congressmen in viewing the I-74 Bridge in May, when he called it [“one of the worst bridges \[he’s\] ever seen.”](#)

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Loebsack and Schilling worked to include an authorization for \$500 million in transportation reauthorization for the Projects of National and Regional Significance program to fund large, interstate bridge projects such as the I-74 Bridge. Loebsack and Schilling called on House Appropriators to fully fund this program while crafting future appropriations bills to ensure I-74 can compete for funding and move forward as quickly as possible.

In 2005, the I-74 Bridge became the most traveled bridge in the Quad Cities with an average of 77,800 vehicles crossing daily. This is despite the fact that it was built for 48,000 such crossings. The Bridge itself is functionally obsolete, however, and has never met Interstate standards. In addition to improving travelers' safety, the I-74 Bridge project would spur economic growth, create construction jobs, reduce traffic backups, and improve air quality.

The full text of the lawmakers' [letter to Secretary LaHood can be found here](#) , and their [letter to Governors Quinn and Branstad can be found here](#)

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