

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted in support of legislation late last evening to modernize transportation infrastructure and invest in community and economic development programs, including over \$1.2 million in congressionally-directed funding for local projects.

“This funding is critically important to help to revitalize our cities and downtowns, and foster economic development where we need it most,” **said Arcuri who is a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee**

. “This bill also includes vital funding for federal programs that support Griffiss Park in Rome, HOPE VI housing in Utica, and community development block grants in Auburn. Investing in transportation improvements to make our roads safer and more efficient goes hand in hand with programs to remediate brownfields, invest in downtown renovations, and work with local businesses to create jobs and opportunity. I urge the Senate to pass this critical bill and the President to sign it into law.”

### **H.R. 3074, FY 2008 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations Bill:**

Improves and maintains our nation’s aging highway infrastructure. The bill will create almost 59,500 jobs across all sectors of the economy.

Includes \$140 million more than current funding for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and \$850 million more than the President’s request for the FAA’s Airport Improvement Program which provides grants-in-aid for airport planning, construction, and development. Griffiss Park airfield in Rome, New York, has benefited greatly from this program, having received a total of \$17 million in AIP funds since 2004. Over the last few years, AIP funds have helped Griffiss continue to fully develop as a regional aviation facility, become the new home of Oneida County Airport, and create long-term regional economic growth for a region often strained to attract new investment.

Rejects efforts to eliminate the HOPE VI program, and instead provides \$120 million, \$21 million over 2007 levels. HOPE VI projects have generated three or four private sector dollars for every government dollar spent. In 2003, the City of Utica, New York was a recipient of an \$11.5 million HOPE VI grant for the revitalization of a local residential community. This grant has allowed for significant improvements in safety and greater access to services and facilities

for its residents. It would be a shame if similar communities around the country were unable to reap the benefits the HOPE VI program provides.

Restores funding for the Community Development Block Grant program, which this Administration has cut by nearly 35 percent since 2001. This bill provides \$1.1 billion more than the President's request for CDBG grants which allow local governments – in cities such as Utica, Rome and Cortland, New York – to provide critical services to revitalize neighborhoods, promote economic development, and improve quality of life for those starved of financial resources.

Provides \$475 million for Amtrak operating grants and a total of \$1.4 billion for Amtrak - \$500 million (75%) more than the Administration's budget request. Reducing funding for passenger rail service not only hurts commuters between big cities, but also will result in decreased service between areas such as Utica and Albany, and even further west to Buffalo. Amtrak provides a majority of all intercity passenger rail service in the United States - reducing congestion and energy consumption. One full passenger train could mean 250 to 350 fewer cars on the road.

H.R. 3074 passed the House late last evening with strong bipartisan support by a vote of 268-153. Arcuri, also a member of the distinguished House Committee on Rules, spoke in support of the legislation on the floor of the House earlier this week. A copy of Arcuri's remarks is included below.

**The Honorable Michael A. Arcuri (NY-24)  
In the House of Representatives  
Floor Speech on the Rule Providing for Consideration of H.R. 3074  
Monday, July 23, 2007**

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this rule and the underlying legislation, the Fiscal Year 2008 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act.

I want to thank the distinguished Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and the Ranking Member for reporting out a bill that does not pay “lip service,” but makes critical investments in our Nation’s transportation infrastructure at the levels guaranteed in SAFETEA-LU.

Mr. Speaker, this bill rejects the Administration’s proposed funding cuts to the FAA’s Airport Improvement Program, highway programs, and critical housing and community development programs.

The bill provides \$140 million more than current funding for the Federal Aviation Administration, and \$850 million more than the President’s request for the FAA’s Airport Improvement Program which provides grants-in-aid for airport planning, construction, and development.

Recipients of AIP funds, such as Griffiss Park airfield in my Upstate New York district, have benefited greatly from this program. Over the last few years, AIP funds have helped Griffiss continue to fully develop as a regional aviation facility, become the new home of Oneida County Airport, and create long-term regional economic growth for a region often strained to attract new investment.

This bill also maintains our commitment to keeping our airways safe by providing \$7 billion – \$219 million more than current funding – to hire more than 1,400 new air traffic controllers to replenish the workforce as the rate of retiring air traffic controllers continues to grow. This bill also provides \$20 million more than the President’s request to hire and train more safety inspectors and for other aviation safety activities.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides \$2.4 billion more than current levels for the Transportation Department. These additional funds will provide for much needed investments in our nation’s highways, road construction and repair, and transportation safety.

This bill boosts funding for the Federal Transit Administration by providing \$288 million more than the President’s request for mass transit programs. Local transit authorities such as the Central New York Regional Transit Authority and CENTRO in my district will now be able to expand their hybrid bus fleet and continue to provide low cost, convenient, clean and energy

efficient transportation services to commuters in both Upstate and in New York City.

Mr. Speaker, this comprehensive legislation also increases funding for the Housing and Urban Development Department by \$3.1 billion above the President's request. This bill provides \$403 million for housing assistance programs which will support the renewal of 1.9 million rental assistance vouchers and provides for 4,000 additional vouchers that will allow us to help more needy families in our communities.

The President's budget request seeks to eliminate funding for the Hope VI (six) program, but I am so pleased that this legislation will maintain our commitment to providing affordable housing for the many disadvantaged individuals across this country – individuals that still struggle daily to meet their family's needs even while working full time jobs.

In 2003, the City of Utica, New York was a recipient of an \$11.5 million HOPE VI (six) grant for the revitalization of a local residential community. This grant has allowed for significant improvements in safety and greater access to services and facilities for its residents. It would be a shame if similar communities around the country were unable to reap the benefits the HOPE VI (six) program provides.

H.R. 3074 restores funding for the Community Development Block Grant program, which this Administration has cut since 2001 by nearly 35 percent. This bill provides \$1.1 billion more than the President's request for CDBG grants which allow local governments – in cities such as Utica, Rome and Auburn, New York – to provide critical services to revitalize neighborhoods, promote economic development, and improve quality of life for those starved of financial resources.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this rule and the underlying legislation.

Thank you, I yield back the balance of my time.

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