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**Rep. Luján Highlights Economic Recovery Needs of New Mexico Communities for House Leadership**

*Luján Speaks on Floor, Sends Letter to Leadership Advocating for Renewable Energy Projects and Infrastructure Improvements in New Mexico*

Washington, DC -- Today, Rep. Ben Ray Luján made a strong statement in support of New Mexico families in the forthcoming economic recovery package. Rep. Luján made a floor statement early in the day, outlining the priorities for his district in the upcoming American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Rep. Luján later sent a letter to House leadership, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, outlining the needs of the district in the recovery plan. The floor statement was Rep. Luján's first as a member of Congress.

"In my district, like districts across the country - families are struggling, parents are losing their jobs, and communities are worried about their future," said Luján in his floor statement. "During these tough times, we can and we must work to create good jobs - to turn our economy in a new direction, the right direction. The people of my district--all across the 16 counties of New Mexico's 3rd--need clean water for their homes and farms, rural development in our smallest and most isolated communities, renewable energy generation that creates high wage jobs, and infrastructure projects that repair roads and create opportunity."

Rep. Luján developed the letter after holding a conference call and meetings with local leaders, including Santa Fe County Commissioner Mike Anaya, Taos Mayor Darren Cordova, Curry County Commissioner and City of Clovis Councilor Robert Sandoval, House District 5 Representative Sandra Jeff Ruiz (who represents parts of Navajo Nation), Los Alamos County Councilor Mike Wheeler, Los Alamos County Councilor Jim Hall, and Espanola Mayor Joseph Maestas.

Last weekend, Rep. Luján visited communities in the 3rd Congressional District. Meeting with many constituents, he took their concerns into consideration before drafting the letter to House Leadership.

"As you know, these are difficult economic times for American families," wrote Luján in his letter to House Leadership. "With a national economic recovery and reinvestment plan on the horizon, I would like to highlight some key areas of interest that have been raised through my recent discussions with government, tribal, and community leaders in my district."

The letter focused on four areas: infrastructure, rural development, renewable energy projects, and preserving critical state services. Each focus area will create jobs in New Mexico.

"Cities and counties are facing an infrastructure crisis due to the poor condition of their roads, bridges, water, and wastewater systems," wrote Luján. "The recovery plan must allocate funds for local infrastructure projects that will repair and restore the infrastructure."

"My district is largely rural and our rural communities are hurting because of our nation's current economic condition. A recovery plan must ensure that funds are being directed to rural community development, and it is particularly critical that programs through USDA Rural Development are utilized."

"With our vast renewable energy resources in our state, we can be an important part of an economic recovery. By directing funds to renewable energy development projects, a recovery plan will create a stronger labor force to support a robust renewable energy economy."

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is currently being marked up in the House.

FULL TEXT:

January 22, 2009

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer:

Congratulations on a successful start to the 111th Congress. As you know, these are difficult economic times for American families. With a national economic recovery and reinvestment plan on the horizon, I would like to highlight some key areas of interest that have been raised through my recent discussions with government, tribal, and community leaders in my district.

Infrastructure:

Cities and counties are facing an infrastructure crisis due to the poor condition of their roads, bridges, water, and wastewater systems. The recovery plan must allocate funds for local infrastructure projects that will repair and restore the infrastructure. Public works projects in this vein will stimulate the economy through job creation and transportation expansion. Additionally, New Mexican families and business suffer when our infrastructure is challenged. It is imperative that the recovery plan addresses this crisis.

Rural Development:

My district is largely rural and our rural communities are hurting because of our nation's current economic condition. A recovery plan must ensure that funds are being directed to rural community development, and it is particularly critical that programs through USDA Rural Development are utilized. Investment in rural economic development and education will create jobs and improve economic conditions across my district and New Mexico.

Renewable Energy Projects:

New Mexico is quickly becoming a leader in renewable energy development. With our vast renewable energy resources in our state, we can be an important part of an economic recovery. By directing funds to renewable energy development projects, a recovery plan will create a stronger labor force to support a robust renewable energy economy. Investing in renewable

energy projects will also reduce our dependence on foreign oil and increase energy efficiency.

**Preserving Critical State Services:**

New Mexico is faced with falling revenues as our economy continues to decline. This loss of revenue has resulted in spending cuts for crucial education and healthcare services. In addition, the increasing costs of Medicaid have contributed to budget shortfalls, and social service programs are not receiving adequate funding. I hope the recovery plan will address this dire situation. Thank you for your consideration of these issues. If you have questions or if there is ever any way I can be helpful, please free to contact me or my office. I look forward to working with you this Congress on issues that mean so much to so many.

Sincerely,

Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress

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