

Wednesday, August 3, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District released the following statement today on the House Republican leadership’s decision to adjourn the House until September 7th while an extension to fund the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) still needs to be passed by Congress.

“For months, the House Republicans have been focused on divisive, partisan issues that have distracted from what should be our top priority – job creation. House Republican leaders even used valuable time on the House floor debating a bill on light bulbs in an attempt to repeal a law that passed with wide bipartisan support years ago.

“Now, with unemployment above 9 percent nationally, Republicans are sending the House of Representatives home for more than a month while nearly 4,000 engineers, safety analysts, and aviation experts are furloughed because of the failure to pass an extension funding the FAA. Congress has passed 20 clean short-term extensions to fund the FAA, yet when it came to the 21st extension, Republicans attempted to target funding for rural airports in certain states, including New Mexico, to throw a wrench into the process. As a result of this partisan gamesmanship, construction projects at airports across the country sit idle, up to a billion dollars in government revenue will go uncollected, and 70,000 jobs are in jeopardy.

“But instead of rolling up their sleeves and getting to work to pass an extension to fund the FAA, the Republican leadership in the House has gone home, leaving workers to twist in the wind for over a month until Congress comes back into session.

“New Mexico is directly feeling the impact of this failure to act. Projects at the Santa Fe airport and the Raton airport have been put on hold. In total, more than a dozen New Mexico projects worth nearly \$10 million have come to a halt and face an uncertain future. I urge my Republican colleagues to reconsider their decision to leave town so that workers in New Mexico and across the country can get back on the job.”

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