



Friday, December 5, 2008

## Obama Stimulus Spending Will Target Roads, Bridges, Public Transit, and Energy Projects

By *Katherine Skiba*

Posted November 19, 2008

Rep. Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and policy assistant to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, told reporters Wednesday to expect the Obama administration to quickly propose an economic stimulus package costing a minimum of \$150 billion but "more likely" in the \$300 billion range. "An economic recovery plan will be the first thing out of the box," he said.



The money would go for infrastructure projects including roads and bridges, public transit, and items in line with President-elect Barack Obama's plan to spend \$150 billion over 10 years on renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

There's much work needed on the nation's electrical grid to efficiently transfer wind and solar power from one part of the country to another, he said.

The package also very likely will feature "substantial portions" of Obama's proposals for tax relief for middle-income Americans, Van Hollen said.

On healthcare, he said, Democrats would like to promptly expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, and within two years move forward on major reforms, which he said could feature discussion of the looming Medicare entitlement crisis.

On the prospect of \$25 billion in new loans for the Big Three automakers, Van Hollen noted the reception the proposals received from lawmakers on the Senate Banking Committee Tuesday, saying they "make it look like prospects are tough, but the door has not been shut on it this year—the door has not been shut on doing something."

He said Democrats were "very leery" of dipping into \$25 billion in earlier loans OK'd to allow carmakers to retool to produce more energy-efficient cars but would be willing to

look at suggestions to tap into some of the money for bridge loans, providing the money would be automatically replenished to satisfy the original intent.

On the 2010 midterm elections, Van Hollen said the DCCC will focus on protecting its freshmen members and also look to districts where Republicans won by less than 55 percent of the vote; where the Democratic candidates were disadvantaged by a mismatch in campaign money; and to the "few and dwindling number of seats" in districts won by John Kerry in 2004 but under GOP control.

Van Hollen said never in history have Democrats won two successive "wave" elections with a pickup of at least 20 seats. He put this year's gain at 22 seats, including Democrat Tom Perriello in Virginia's 5th District, with three other races yet to be decided. The Virginia contest, against Republican Virgil Goode, has not been officially called, but the consensus is Perriello will be declared the winner, Van Hollen said.

*\*Click [here](#) for more on the economy*

**Tags:** [economy](#) | [Barack Obama](#) | [economic stimulus](#) | [Obama administration](#)

Copyright © 2008 U.S.News & World Report LP All rights reserved.