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House Highway Bill Includes Miller Center's Mineta-Skinner Transportation Report Recommendations

Washington, D.C. – House Transportation Committee Chair John Mica (R-FL) today unveiled a highway reauthorization bill that includes several recommendations proposed in a report released last year by the Miller Center. Working with former Transportation Secretaries Norman Mineta and Samuel Skinner, the Miller Center released “Well Within Reach: America’s New Transportation Agenda,” which outlines recommendations to fix the nation’s overburdened transportation system.

The report can be read online at

http://web1.millercenter.org/conferences/report/conf_2009_transportation.pdf.

Miller Center recommendations in the House bill include:

- Clarifying federal decision-making power and enhancing the decision-making power of states, localities, and metropolitan-planning organizations.
- Focusing federal efforts on a federal purpose, providing states with greater flexibility to prioritize and implement transportation projects.
- Reforming project planning and review, permitting processes to speed actual implementation.
- Encouraging public-private partnerships while also improving oversight of such partnerships.

Other proposals in the Miller Center report include:

- **Stop the bleeding** - Congress must address the immediate crisis in transportation funding. The House bill allocates about \$35 billion

annually, as compared to the \$50 billion allocated in 2010. \$85-118 billion is necessary to actually improve the system, as cited in the Miller Center's report.

- **Beyond the gas tax** – Future funding mechanisms should not depend primarily on fossil-fuel consumption, which the government is actively seeking to discourage through a number of other policies, to keep up with transportation investment needs.
- **Jobs for the future, not just for today** – Future stimulus spending should be directed to those transportation projects that will deliver the greatest returns in terms of future U.S. competitiveness, economic growth, and jobs.
- **Adopt a capital budget** – The federal government should adopt accounting methods that recognize expenditures on transportation infrastructure as investments and take into account future returns on those investments.
- **Connect the dots** – Adopt an integrated approach to transportation planning that includes freight and goods movement and stresses intermodal connectivity.
- **Getting Americans home in time for dinner** – Find more effective ways of reducing urban congestion.
- **Build a foundation for informed policy** – Better and more timely data are essential to measure progress toward defined goals and objectives and to improve the performance of the nation's transportation systems.

The report is based on the David R. Goode National Transportation Policy Conference, which was held at the Miller Center and attended by more than 80 experts representing a wide array of transportation interests. They included current and former Transportation Department officials, national and state policymakers, community planners, as well as representatives from trucking, rail, aviation and business associations. Mineta and Skinner co-chaired the conference.

A follow-up conference will take place this fall.

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