

**URBAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION, NAACP MILWAUKEE,
SPOTTED EAGLE, INC., ACLU of WISCONSIN FOUNDATION, MIDWEST
ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES, CITIZENS ALLIED FOR SANE HIGHWAYS,
TRANSIT MATTERS, WISPIRG, SIERRA CLUB - JOHN MUIR CHAPTER**

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**Advocates Say That Public Transportation Will Bring the
Most ‘Bang’ for the Economic Stimulus Buck**

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A coalition of community and environmental groups is urging Governor Doyle and the Department of Transportation to devote economic stimulus money to expand and improve Wisconsin’s public transportation system. In a letter to WisDOT Secretary, Busalacchi the coalition urged that money allocated to Wisconsin by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009’s Surface Transportation Program (ARRA STP) go to projects that will deliver the highest return on investment.

“Particularly in light of Wisconsin’s \$6.6 billion current budget deficit, it is especially important that we invest these funds wisely in areas where they will have the greatest impact in our economic recovery,” said Megan Carr, Project Coordinator with the Urban Economic Development Association. “Recent studies show that mass transit projects generate more in terms of jobs and economic growth in comparison to new roads and bridges.”

The coalition particularly urged that funds be spent to improve transit in low income communities. The letter states that “Sustained economic development depends on engaging as many people as possible in the economy. For the broader economy it is better for someone who is unemployed to get a job than for someone who is already employed to switch jobs. Putting or keeping transit in communities with high unemployment produces up to 2.5 times more jobs than putting transit in communities with low unemployment.”

“While the jobs have been moving to the suburbs, outside of Milwaukee’s bus system, less than half of African-American and Hispanic adults in Milwaukee have driver’s licenses, and some of those who have licenses don’t have regular access to a car.,” said Midwest Environmental Advocates’s Executive Director, Karen Schapiro. “Many communities of color had high unemployment before the recession hit. It is more critical than ever for Wisconsin to build a transportation infrastructure that allows low-income communities to connect to jobs. It’s good for the community and it’s good for the economy.”

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