

January 26, 2011

WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio today responded to President Obama's State of the Union address. Following are DeFazio's remarks:

"Americans' have made clear that their number one priority is the creation of secure family wage jobs, and rightfully so considering that Oregon's unemployment remains well above 10%. Each \$1 billion of Federal transportation investment creates or sustains over 34,000 jobs and \$6.2 billion in economic activity. Those are family-wage jobs designing bridges, building roads, and manufacturing American-made buses and streetcars—jobs that can't be shipped overseas. Investment in infrastructure is one of the few worthwhile uses of deficit spending because the future generations bearing the burden of the cost will benefit from the cost. We cannot win the future, if we do not invest in the future.

For two years, I have been pushing for the reauthorization of a comprehensive 6-year transportation bill that would rebuild our crumbling roads, bridges and highways. The time for talk is over. We need to start pouring concrete today. We urgently need investments to create jobs, improve our long term economic viability which makes us more efficient and our businesses more competitive. I didn't hear that urgency in the president's speech.

However, we can't create and keep jobs at home unless we drastically change our trade policy. President Obama said tonight that we must focus on both creating family-wage jobs and increasing American competitiveness in the world economy, but then lauded his own efforts to pass a Bush negotiated Korean Free Trade Agreement that continues the same failed trade model as NAFTA. Despite promises to the contrary, these free trade agreements have shipped millions of American jobs overseas, devastated American manufacturing, and deepened the long recession. We need to reverse our trade policies. The American middle class cannot afford to keep shouldering the burden of these 'job killing' agreements and I will fight to stop these disastrous policies from becoming law.

I had hoped the president would have been stronger and drawn a line in the sand protecting Social Security and our seniors. Social Security benefits should be off limits when it comes to budget cuts. Social Security did not add one penny to the national debt until the recent payroll tax cut, which now forces the federal government to borrow \$112 million to replenish the Social Security Trust Fund for the lost revenue. We cannot jeopardize the future of Social Security with huge cuts as some Republicans have indicated they intend to do.

We can get our 'fiscal house in order' as the president said tonight, without cutting essential programs like Social Security and Medicare. I hope that the Republican leadership can also agree to specific and meaningful measures that truly have a hand in decreasing the deficit rather than continuing with their 'Roadmap' to nowhere. Spending cuts alone will not balance the budget. We need tax reform and need to cut tax breaks for industry that ship our jobs overseas.

President Obama highlighted the regulation of northwest salmon as an example of bureaucratic inefficiency. The president complained of two different departments regulating salmon when in fact there are at least four departments and several agencies responsible for implementing the

laws to protect salmon. The federal government should be able to regulate salmon with less bureaucracy. I agree it's not necessary and we can do better."

□

□

□

- 30 -