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Stimulus Package: Proposed Jobs for South Carolina



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Anchor

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The House of Representatives is expected to pass President Obama's proposed stimulus package this week. It calls for spending hundreds of millions of dollars for road and bridge projects to create jobs.

Many Republican lawmakers, including some in the Upstate, plan to vote no. How could the plan translate into local jobs? And what do Republicans propose instead?

President Obama's stimulus plan is supposed to get people out of the unemployment lines and into 3 to 4 million new jobs. Said President Obama, "We can't afford distractions and we can't afford delays."

The plan proposes to do that by spending \$500 million on road and bridge projects. The South Carolina Department of Transportation says it's too early to cite specific projects, but says some are just waiting for money. Of the money it might receive, SCDOT proposes spending 33% on resurfacing, 33% for county roads, 16% on maintenance, and 12% to replace bridges.

AAA of the Carolina's came out urging Congress to pass the bill today. Said Linda Birch with AAA, "We're aware of many opportunities out there from projects that are waiting to be done, in other words they are shovel-ready, ready to go."

Unlike the last stimulus package, this proposal does not include a stimulus check for taxpayers but does offer some tax cuts.

But many Republicans, like Congressman Bob Inglis of Greenville, will not vote for it, saying the Congressional Budget Office projects only 7% of the discretionary funds would be spent the first year. After consulting national and local economists, Inglis proposes spending more money on local shovel-ready projects that could provide immediate jobs, such as establishing electronic medical records and local construction projects.

Said Inglis, "Clemson University has two buildings that are on hold right now. Those are shovel-ready, fully vetted, that if they were back in construction could put people work immediately."

Inglis says the Obama plan sets up too many projects that the government will have to continue to fund even after the recession is over.

Some Republicans say Obama's plan includes wasteful spending, citing \$650 million for DTV coupons, \$200 to fix up the national mall, and \$200 million for contraceptive services.