



Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Happy Birthday, Recovery Act!

They grow up so fast! Seems like only yesterday that President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. But here we are a year later. And what a way we've come!

California already has managed more than \$25 billion in Recovery Act money, flowing into public infrastructure projects, energy efficiency programs, job training and providing a safety net to thousands of Californians. And Governor Schwarzenegger is continuing to fight for every federal stimulus dollar, and is working along with the California Recovery Task Force to ensure each federal dollar is invested quickly and effectively, all with the greatest transparency associated with government spending.

Today, the Governor is in L.A. to celebrate and also announce that California will have committed more than \$2.5 billion in Recovery Act funds to almost 900 transportation projects by the end of February. The California Department of Transportation was able to make many of these dollars stretch even further than initially planned due to contracts coming below original cost estimates and thus creating more jobs and paving more roads.

This isn't the only thing worth celebrating. Since the Recovery Act was signed into law one year ago:

- California received \$2.34 billion for the only true high-speed train in the nation, capable of 200-plus miles per hour. We're also further along in planning than any other state in the nation.
- California had an influx of \$48.1 million to expand services offered at community health centers. These health centers deliver preventive and primary care services to patients regardless of their ability to pay. The funds will provide care to an estimated additional 303,474 patients in California over the next two years, including approximately 148,376 uninsured people.

- Newly unemployed individuals will have an easier time of retaining their health care through their previous employer. New provisions under the Recovery Act will require eligible former employees to pay only 35 percent of the cost of their COBRA coverage. And their former employers are entitled to a federal tax credit for the other 65 percent of the COBRA cost.
- The California Employment Development Department has dispersed \$415 million of Recovery Act funds to 49 local Workforce Investment Boards to help bolster. This \$415 million nearly doubled the amount of Workforce Investment Act funds the federal government allocated to California in the 2009 fiscal year.
- Nearly 650 California police officers will be hired or rehired because of \$211 million from the COPS Hiring Recovery Program.
- California is receiving an additional \$270.5 million for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, assisting local communities in preventing and cleaning up water pollution and protecting public health and the environment.
- Free weatherization services will be available to reduce the heating and cooling costs for more than 50,000 low-income families to improve the energy efficiency of homes and ensuring their health and safety.
- California was the first state in the nation to be federally approved for State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF). Through the Governor's leadership, California received over \$3.1 billion in the spring of 2009, as well as an additional grant of \$1.3 billion in the fall of 2009. These funding awards make up 90 percent of the total amount available under SFSF for both K-12 and higher education.

And here's one of the best parts: to date, the Recovery has created more than 150,000 jobs in California. And the White House estimates that 400,000 jobs will be created here over the life of the program.

There are many more stories to be told and we're just getting started with the Recovery Act. I suggest you visit the California Economic Recovery Task Force's web site, www.recovery.ca.gov, to learn even more. Just one year in, the Recovery Act has helped pull us back from the brink of economic disaster and is helping lay a firm foundation for California's economic recovery.

Thank you for your interest in the Recovery Act. We hope you'll join us in making a wish to put more Californians back to work and revitalize our economy as we blow out the celebratory candle!