

(Washington, D.C.) -- In an effort to speed up the repair of structurally deficient bridges in Pennsylvania, U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) today voted for legislation that will provide Pennsylvania with more than \$97 million to help repair many of the state's 5,700 structurally deficient bridges. Under the National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act of 2008 (HR 3999), \$1 billion in additional funding would be authorized in the FY 2009 budget to repair structurally deficient bridges nationwide. As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Congressman Altmire has been a consistent advocate for increasing investment in our nation's infrastructure. This bill passed by a vote of 367-55.

**“Pennsylvania has the highest number of structurally deficient bridges in the nation. In western Pennsylvania, there are more than 1,000 bridges that are in need of rehabilitation, repair or replacement,” Altmire said. “This \$97 million in federal funding, in conjunction with the \$350 million investment in bridge repairs that Governor Rendell signed into law earlier this month, could go a long way toward making the necessary repairs to ensure the safety of our bridges.”**

In addition to increasing funding, this legislation will also ensure funds are directed to bridges in the greatest need of repair or replacement. It will require a risk-based prioritization for the repair of deficient bridges to ensure states are investing in upgrading the bridges most important to public safety and economic well-being.

It will also improve bridge inspections nationwide by requiring the Federal Highway Administration to immediately update the National Bridge Inspection Standards and establish uniformity among states in conducting inspections and evaluations. States will also be required to immediately inspect all structurally deficient bridges, with additional inspections required annually. All other bridges will be inspected once every two years.

**“With the I-35 W bridge collapse in Minneapolis last year, we saw the unacceptable consequences of failing to invest in the maintenance of our nation's infrastructure,” Altmire said. “Establishing a risk-based prioritization for bridge repairs will help to ensure that this much-needed federal funding is being used as effectively as possible.”**