

June 22, 2011

(Washington, DC) – The U.S. Department of Transportation has announced that it will suspend a multi-million dollar program that sent agency officials abroad to study foreign billboards. The decision comes just days after U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) and seven House colleagues sent a letter to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood expressing concerns about taxpayer dollars being spent on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) International Scan Program.

Altmire, a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, was the only Democrat to sign the letter.

"This is exactly the type of wasteful spending that is unjustifiable and that we cannot afford. I am pleased that Secretary LaHood has responded to our concerns by suspending the program, which had been in existence for many years," said Altmire. "Every taxpayer dollar that is spent needs to be carefully scrutinized. I am hopeful that the administration will continue to conduct reviews of programs at all federal agencies so we can put an end to this type of inefficient spending."

The FHWA's International Scan Program sent government transportation employees abroad to study how other countries operate their major highway networks. One recent group of transportation officials visited five countries over the span of 17 days to study billboard advertising at a cost of roughly \$300,000. The program has sent groups of federal and state employees on similar trips as often as four times per year over the past decade, at a total cost of nearly \$12 million.