

**Washington, DC** (March 29, 2012) - Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) released the following statement in opposition to H.R. 4281 – the Surface Transportation Extension Act:

“Today I voted against H.R. 4281, the Surface Transportation Extension Act. I oppose this legislation not because I oppose transportation funding – on the contrary – but because we can and should pass a better-funded and longer-term bill.

The unemployment rate in the construction industry is nearly double the national average. Over the past year, I have met with many of my constituents who work in the construction industry, including construction workers, designers, managers, engineers, contractors, and developers. The one thing they have all shared is that another short-term extension will not bring enough certainty to the industry to encourage the types of project development and job creation that our country needs.

I object to H.R. 4281 because there is a better bill we can pass right now. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 14, or MAP-21, which is identical to the bill that passed the Senate with an overwhelming bipartisan majority, 74-22. MAP-21 would fund our transportation and infrastructure needs for two years. If the Republican leadership would allow that bill to come to the floor, we could pass it today. Instead, they have elected to play political games and pass a bill that promotes an unpredictable transportation future.

I can't support a 90-day extension that will bring another funding battle at the end of June, during the heart of our construction season in Illinois. This attempt to “kick the can down the road” will delay projects and risk 4,500 jobs in our state alone. We need to move forward with legislation that will provide our state, local communities, and small businesses the stability and predictability they need. A short-term extension will do nothing to alleviate concerns about future funding and will not reduce unemployment.

Businesses and employees need the increased certainty that MAP-21 will provide. We owe it to our constituents to oppose a short-term extension in favor of that bipartisan, common-sense legislation that will protect and promote our economic and transportation needs.”

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