



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No. 09-16

Governor Expresses Concerns on Economic Stimulus While in D.C.

February 1, 2009, Juneau, Alaska - Governor Sarah Palin this weekend met with business, economic and political leaders in the nation's capital to discuss problems she sees for Alaska with the pending economic stimulus package in Congress.

"Alaska and other states need to be treated fairly," Governor Palin said. "Much of the stimulus plan we've seen focuses on spending for government programs that would be a burden on states to continue funding, and doesn't focus enough on spending that actually does put people back to work and stimulate the economy. Working with our D.C. staff, I took advantage of the opportunity to speak with Democrats and Republicans to voice my concerns. I appreciate their time and assistance in paying attention to our state."

Governor Palin discussed troubling elements in the stimulus package including provisions that punish Alaska for forward-funding education, the mass transit funding formula that will limit Alaska opportunities but will pour money into other states, and the "shovel-ready" criteria for projects that northern climates might not be able to accommodate consistently due to the shortened construction season.

The governor continues to express concerns first identified in a Jan. 7 letter to the Alaska congressional delegation about the overall level of spending and the hugely increased deficit our nation is growing. Under the legislation, the U.S. would continue sending money to OPEC nations even as it continues to borrow and miss opportunities to develop domestic supplies of energy.

"Worst of all, the stimulus package rewards states for not planning when it comes to prioritizing for things like education, as Alaska has planned ahead by forward-funding 21 percent of our General Fund dollars for this very important priority," said Palin. "It appears only those states that did not plan ahead with education will benefit. States like Alaska should not be punished for being responsible; yet that's what the plan means for Alaska right now."

The governor has asked the nation's leaders to look at these issues to ensure fairness in the stimulus package and that the package does not harm the long-term fiscal health of the nation. Contrary to some news reports, she looks forward to continuing to work with Alaska's congressional delegation to accomplish the state's goals.

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