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Highway 20 project placed on list for federal stimulus funds

State Rep. Jean Cowan (D-Newport) applauded the Oregon Transportation Commission for approving a package of transportation improvement projects that will create jobs across Oregon. These projects will be funded through federal stimulus money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Of particular importance to House District 10 was the decision to include \$13.8 million for the final leg of the Pioneer Mountain/Eddyville project on Highway 20 in this round of disbursement.

When a decision about the specific lists of projects for immediate funding was postponed at the Feb. 18 meeting of the commission, Cowan and State Transportation Commissioner Alan Brown of Newport worked together to return the Highway 20 project to the list approved Friday.

"There could be no better description of a 'shovel-ready' project that will impact livability and economic stimulus for the coastal region," said Cowan in a letter directed to the commission. "Moving this project forward will expand much needed construction projects in our district, as well as facilitating a much safer and more efficient transportation route for industrial users, local residents, and our most welcome guests."

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners also supported the effort to prioritize the Highway 20 project and the commission's actions, which allocated a total of \$122.6 million in federal funds for 31 projects.

"In these tough times, focusing on efforts that save or create jobs is essential," said Cowan. "The commission's action on this project shows how important it is for our local economy."

Brown serves on the Oregon Transportation Commission and owns Alan Brown Tire Center/Les Schwab in Newport. He served as state representative for the central coast for three terms.

Cowan is serving in her second term as state representative.

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