

# Oberstar Democracy Project



Friends of Jim Oberstar  
222 West 1st Street  
Duluth, Minnesota

Phone: 218-723-8813  
www.oberstar.org

July 31st, 2007

Volume II, Issue VI

## Inside this issue:

Farm Bill	1
FOJO Welcomes New Webmaster	1
Transportation	2
Contact the Campaign	3
WRDA	3
Volunteer!	4

## Farm Bill Passes House

Congressman Jim Oberstar has nothing but high hopes for the farm bill that passed the House of Representatives last week. "We are putting family farmers first; this legislation represents real reform," said Oberstar, "We have re-structured commodity price supports so they favor family farms and not big corporations. This bill also invests in programs that stimulate the economic growth in rural America and promotes renewable technology."

In a move to strengthen family farms the Farm Bill denies program payments to farmers with average adjusted gross income over \$1 million, with no exceptions. Furthermore it denies farm payments to those with an adjusted gross income from \$500,000 to \$1 million-unless two thirds of income is agriculture related. Under current legislation, those with an income of up to \$2.5 million can receive payments, and those with more than 75 per-

cent of agriculture income can still receive payment despite the cap, thus favoring larger, corporate farms.

"This legislation will help level the playing field," said Oberstar, "we are targeting growth if rural America, and giving the family farm a real chance to compete in the global market." Funding for the Farm Bill will in part come from closing tax loopholes that allow foreign companies to avoid paying billions in taxes that US companies are forced to pay.

Some other Farm Bill provisions:

- Payment limitations that will save more than \$500 million and redirect funds to the people who need it most: working family farmers and ranchers.
- Historic investments in programs to support fruit and vegetable producers who have not received traditional Farm Bill benefits.

- Improved funding and access to conservation programs that take environmentally sensitive land out of farming and encourage environmentally friendly practices on working farmland.

- An expansion of renewable fuel production that encourages energy independence and protects our environment. The Farm bill provides loan guarantees for the development of refineries that process renewable fuels, a key step toward bringing more renewable fuels to market in America.

- Investments in rural communities nationwide, including economic development programs and access to broadband telecommunication services.

- Increases in funding for nutrition programs that help families in need, including increasing the purchasing power of food stamps.

## FOJO Welcomes New Webmaster

Bryan Yunis of Duluth joined the campaign earlier this summer to take over as the webmaster for www.oberstar.org. Bryan worked on the campaign last year doing research and press work under John Schadl, and brings experience as a web-developer for other non-profit organizations. Bryan was born and raised in Duluth. "I have always looked

up to Jim and I am excited about the opportunity to join a great team with a great leader." Bryan will oversee the web page and also work in media and communication, as the Friends of Jim Oberstar team moves toward the 2008 election. Bryan is a student at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth pursuing a history degree.





## Oberstar Invests in America

*“We are investing in America with this bill,” said Oberstar. “It increases funding for housing programs that benefit seniors and low-income families.”*

Congressman Jim Oberstar has secured more than \$12 million in funding for Minnesota projects and programs in the Transportation - Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. The bill, approved late Tuesday, contains six projects Oberstar included, ranging from commuter rail to a program on the Iron Range to help troubled kids.

The bill invests \$50 billion in transportation infrastructure and social programs in fiscal year 2008. “We are investing in America with this bill,” said Oberstar. “It increases funding for housing programs that benefit seniors and low-income families. We are also working to reverse a decade of cuts and neglect by the Republican-led Congress that has shortchanged numerous programs, including the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). Communities across the country rely on CDBG funding to address needs from fixing streets to creating new jobs.”

The bill also continues to fund highway construction, mass transit and airport modernization across the country.

And in addition, this bill provides \$1.4 billion for Amtrak, ending years of cuts to that program. “Passenger rail is an important part of an overall program to end our dependence on foreign oil and combat congestion on our nation’s highways,” said Oberstar. “We are making sure that Amtrak can make the capital investments necessary to improve the railroad’s overall service and reliability.”

The following projects are contained in Oberstar’s bill:

**NorthStar Commuter Rail, MN, \$10,000,000**

The NorthStar Commuter Rail is a 40-mile commuter rail line running from Big Lake to downtown Minneapolis. The project includes a five-block extension of the Hiawatha LRT line to reach the downtown Minneapolis commuter rail station.

**Cambridge - Isanti Bike/Walk Trail, Cambridge, MN, \$250,000**

The Cambridge-Isanti Bike/Walk Trail is part of the cities of Cambridge and Isanti’s vision to construct a non-motorized corridor serving to

connect the two communities and will connect with existing trail systems. This project will provide a safe non-motorized route for students to school, residents and visitors to travel between the two communities.

**I-35/ MN TH95, North Branch, MN, \$1,500,000**

This funding will be used to reconstruct the interchange with I-35 and provides TH95 improvements in the City of North Branch.

**MN TH38 Improvements, Itasca County, MN, \$500,000**

This funding will help improve sections of the highway to accommodate heavy trucks.

**Transit Bus Facilities, Duluth, MN, \$200,000**

This funding will increase service coordination and improve vehicle and service performance.

**Mesabi Academy of KidsPeace, Buhl, MN, \$150,000**

This funding will be used to expand its facility to provide additional therapeutic services.



*“Passenger rail is an important part of an overall program to end our dependence on foreign oil and combat congestion on our nation’s highways,” said Oberstar.*



# Jim Oberstar

## WORKING for you for minnesota

### Contact the Campaign!

Blake Chaffee	Alana Petersen	Local DFL Unit
Campaign Manager	Political Director	Chair: Don Bye
(218) 310- 4376	(218) 213- 4129	8th CD:
<a href="mailto:blake@oberstar.org">blake@oberstar.org</a>	<a href="mailto:alana@oberstar.org">alana@oberstar.org</a>	<a href="http://www.cd8dfll.org">www.cd8dfll.org</a>

### WRDA Moves Through Conference

Last week a House and Senate Conference Committee moved on the \$21 billion dollar Water Resource Development Act (WRDA). A vote is expected on the measure in both chambers of congress this week.

President Bush is expected to sign the bill into law, authorizing 940 Army Corp of Engineers projects. Congressman Oberstar, and his counterpart in the Senate, Barbara Boxer (D-CA), both hope to see the

legislation move quickly this week to be signed into law. WRDA is expected to pass with broad bi-partisan support, but Republicans have warned against adding onto the bill. "We cannot add anything," said Boxer, "that would be a major deal-breaker."

Congressman Oberstar is optimistic about passing the legislation, as well as its implication for efficiency and the environment, "This is a monu-

mental opportunity for congress to invest in America, this bill will help communities update their water utility infrastructure and emphasize the importance of environmentalism."

The final version of WRDA will authorize \$11.5 billion for 43 Chief of Engineers' reports. It also authorizes 100 new corps studies and 160 modifications to previous projects

# Jim Oberstar

**WORKING** for you   
for minnesota

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me about—

The Oberstar Democracy Project

Volunteering

Traveling around MN to support Democrats

Placing a lawn sign in my yard

Writing a letter to the editor

Using my name and testimonial

**Oberstar**  
**Democracy Project**

Please sign me up for—

The Oberstar Democracy Project

E-mail updates from Jim

Please share your story about Jim:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---