

NEWS RELEASE
Minnesota House Passes Bonding Bill

ST. PAUL – The Minnesota House of Representatives passed a “basic bonding bill” today on a vote of 93 to 40. The \$200 million public works bill is designed to create new jobs quickly by leveraging federal matching dollars to protect health and safety, improve transportation and other infrastructure, and preserve state assets by repairing or renovating existing structures.

“With Minnesota facing the highest unemployment rate since World War II, the value of a bill like this can’t be overstated,” said State Rep. Brita Sailer. “Every economist we hear from tells us the best way for state government to get the economy moving again is to invest in job creation and infrastructure.”

In odd-numbered years, the Legislature’s primary job is to craft the state’s two-year state budget and a supplemental bonding bill. Lawmakers this session are grappling with a \$6.4 billion budget deficit and unemployment numbers projected to keep rising throughout 2010. Sailer said the bill was limited to basic projects like asset preservation for state colleges and universities in an effort to work cooperatively with the Governor. While the package doesn’t include projects advanced by municipalities that usually make up a portion of a public works bill, it does contain funding to leverage federal matching dollars, including some for local bridge repair and flood mitigation efforts, as well as funding for a national solar testing lab and certification laboratory at the University of Minnesota-Morris campus that Sailer authored.

“All of the projects are important to a Northern Minnesota economy looking for opportunities to recover,” said Sailer. “The focus on projects that can get underway quickly and that ensures we get every penny of federal money we qualify for will give a significant boost to our economy by getting people back to work at the time we need it most.”