

# **A SECOND LOOK AT THE SECOND OPINION: COBURN REPORT RIDDLED WITH FALSEHOODS, OUTDATED INFORMATION AND MISLEADING ASSERTIONS**

## **A Statement from Ed DeSeve, Senior Advisor to the President for Recovery Act Implementation:**

“We have approved more than 20,000 Recovery Act projects to get America’s economy moving again. The program is, overall, a great success. With 20,000 projects approved, there are bound to be some mistakes – when we find them, we have been transparent about it, and worked on a bipartisan basis to shut them down immediately. Sen. Coburn’s report, however, is filled with inaccuracies, including criticisms of projects that have already been stopped, projects that never were approved, and some projects that are working quite well. If Sen. Coburn has found any problematic projects, we will address them immediately - but much of this seems to be little more than an objection to the Recovery Act itself, which Sen. Coburn opposed. As state officials in Sen. Coburn’s own home state have noted, ‘We have people working today who would not have jobs if the stimulus package hadn’t passed.’”

**1. “Free” Stimulus Money Results in Higher Utility Costs for Residents of Perkins, Oklahoma**

**Response:** States, not EPA, make the decisions about Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) ARRA project selection and terms, including the form of assistance (loans or grants) and interest rates. Communities constructing new facilities typically face higher utility rates in order to repay any loan. However, the affordable loan rates provided through the SRF save the community and ratepayers money over the long term compared to market rates.

While the Buy American and Davis-Bacon provisions added to ARRA by Congress can increase project costs, they create U.S. jobs and provide workers with a fair wage. If the Buy American provisions increase a project's costs by more than 25 percent, the State can apply for a waiver.

**2. FutureGen: The Stimulus Earmark that Wasn’t, Becomes the Costliest Pork Project in History**

**Response:** The development of carbon capture and storage technology – and the ability for coal-based power plants to achieve zero carbon emissions – is crucially important for our country's energy future. The announcement related to the FutureGen project was the result of a joint decision by private and public partners in the project. The Department of Energy undertook a review of the FutureGen cost estimates and reviewed a series of alternative proposals. Ultimately, Recovery Act funds will be used for detailed design and construction if and only if the FutureGen Alliance and the project successfully meet a series of milestone reviews. This process ensures that the FutureGen project will receive the full funding only if it proves to be a smart investment.

**3. Little-Used “Shovel-Ready” Bridges in Rural Wisconsin Given Priority Over Widely Used Structurally Deficient Bridge.**

**Response:** We’d like to correct some facts in this highlighted project. The write up quoted the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* which cites traffic figures for the Blooming Grove, WI, bridge of 85,600 cars per day, rather than the correct figure of 8,560 cars per day. If the Blooming Grove Bridge actually had 85,600 cars per day crossing over it, the bridge would be seeing three times the amount of traffic on the most heavily traveled stretch of an interstate.

- 4. John Murtha Airport in Johnstown, Pennsylvania has only three flights a day but will receive \$800,000 to repave a backup runway.**

**Response:** Still under review.

- 5. \$3.4 Million for Wildlife “Eco-Passage” in Florida; Project Still May Take Years to Finish**

**Response:** Still under review.

- 6. Nevada Non-Profit Gets Weatherization Contract After Being Fired For Same Work**

**Response:** FALSE. The Community Services Agency was never fired or defunded by the State and has over 25 years of experience managing the Weatherization Program.<sup>1</sup>

- 7. Non-Existent Oklahoma Lake Gets Over \$1 Million For a New Guardrail**

**Response:** FALSE. “Work on the guardrail project is not going forward as we explore other approaches to protecting public safety.” Army Corps of Engineers

- 8. Taxpayers Taken for a Ride: Nearly \$10 Million to be Spent to Renovate a Century Old Train Station that Hasn’t Been Used in 30 Years**

**Response:** The Elizabethtown train station sits along an important transit line in Eastern Pennsylvania between Harrisburg and Philadelphia. This line has enabled the growth of the Lancaster County region in recent years, and the Elizabethtown station is vital to the commuters who live in the area. More than 80,000 passengers use the Elizabethtown station every year, a number which has increased 90% from the approximately 43,000 riders who used the station just five years ago. Improvements to the outdated station will create jobs and improve the riding experience for the passengers who rely on the station every day to get to work. The renovated station will allow ridership to increase even more in the coming years, leading to increased business development and better quality of life for all area residents. (<http://articles.lancasteronline.com/local/4/238232>)

- 9. 10,000 Dead People Get Stimulus Checks, Social Security Administration Blames a Tough Deadline**

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<sup>1</sup>Two years ago, in 2007, CSA experienced problems with the quality of work of a program manager and some contractors. Nevada Rural Housing Authority brought suit against CSA and Nevada State's Housing Division, and CSA agreed to cease its management of the program until the problems were solved. Since then, CSA hired a seasoned Weatherization Director (the former director of the Nevada Rural Housing Authority). In response to these changes, Nevada Rural Housing Authority dropped its suit against CSA.

**Response:** This problem was corrected and misdirected government funds have been reclaimed.

**10. Town of Union, New York, Encouraged to Spend Money It Did Not Request For a Problem It Does Not Have**

**Response:** FALSE: Although funds are allocated to towns via formula, the grantees are required to submit a plan for use of the funds, which Union did.<sup>2</sup>

**11. Illinois county to spend \$173,824 weatherization grant on eight pickup trucks.**

**Response:** FALSE. This grant is not supported by ARRA funding.

**12. South Dakota fish hatchery to spend half of a \$20,000 grant on a freezer for fish sperm.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**13. Wisconsin nursing home receives \$2.8 million in stimulus money it didn't need or request.**

**Response:** FALSE. The Knapp Haven Nursing Home had originally applied for a non-ARRA Community Facilities Direct Loan for a nursing home renovation in Chetek, Wisconsin, but applied instead for ARRA funding as there were not sufficient funds in the USDA Rural Development State Office allocation. It is possible that the project would have gone unfunded without the ARRA funding.

**14. Iowa state legislators are using money freed up by federal stimulus cash to buy \$11 million in new cars the State does not need.**

**Response:** MISLEADING. This is not a direct use of ARRA funds to buy cars, and is pure speculation, given that this article was written in April, on where the funding for the cards came.

**15. Road signs costing \$300 each are being placed at construction sites to alert motorists that the project is being paid for by stimulus money.**

**Response:** Road project signage is both customary, and an allowable use of funds.

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<sup>2</sup> The Homeless Prevention/Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) funds in the Recovery Act were allocated to grantees via a formula; grantees did not apply. However, grantees are required to accept the funds by submitting an appending plan. The HPRP Notice indicates that that if grantees do not have the capacity to administer the funds or don't need them, they should simply decline and the funds would be reallocated to other communities. The City of Union did not, in fact, decline the funds but submitted their spending plan outlining how they plan to spend the money that was allocated to them. Also, HPRP funds are largely intended to prevent homelessness, not necessarily correct a chronic homelessness problem, so the fact that someone in the town wasn't "aware of any homelessness issue in the largely suburban town" is irrelevant. It can be used assist folks that are at risk of losing their homes due to job loss, or the inability to make mortgage payments.

**16. Stimulus grant may cost Dayton, Ohio 1,200 jobs.**

**Response:** FALSE. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has a long standing policy that prohibits the agency from providing funds to incentivize a corporate relocation from one U.S. region to another.

**Press Reports:** [http://www.daytondailynews.com/blogs/content/shared-gen/blogs/dayton/opinion/entries/2009/06/04/editorial\\_stimulus\\_money\\_hard.html](http://www.daytondailynews.com/blogs/content/shared-gen/blogs/dayton/opinion/entries/2009/06/04/editorial_stimulus_money_hard.html).

**17. The governor of Michigan is using \$500,000 to renovate the Ypsilanti Freighthouse, which may house a “yoga or children's movement class” and a full-time tourist information center.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**18. Critics question whether the much-hyped 2000th transportation stimulus project is necessary.**

**Response:** This project is a much needed project that was labeled by FOX News as one of the very “best” Recovery Act projects in the country. See <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/05/06/stimulus-report-card-hits-misses/>

**19. Parking lot that no one wants.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**20. Ohio state legislators oppose the governor’s plans to use \$57 million for “planning and preliminary studies instead of bricks-and-mortar construction.”**

**Response:** FALSE. The Ohio Department of Transportation is directing these dollars to shorter-term projects, aimed at quickly creating and retaining construction-related jobs.

<http://www.dot.state.oh.us/news/Pages/ODOTsStimulusInvestmentsspurringmoreConstruction-RelatedJobs.aspx>

**21. Minnesota theater wins millions over bigger job producers.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**22. Illinois will spend \$350,000 to build a four-person bunkhouse at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge.**

**Response:** FALSE. This project was on a contingency project list and is not planned for implementation. Planned Interior Recovery Act projects can be found at [www.doi.gov/recovery](http://www.doi.gov/recovery).

**23. Police jobs in Columbus, Ohio saved by stimulus could still leave officers getting pink slips.**

**Response:** MISLEADING. In some cases, States may have HR rules or union contracts regarding those who may be laid off and in what order. If the grantee needs to change the project plan a Change of Scope request must be submitted to the Grant Manager for approval.

As the President said in Columbus, these funds can't solve every problem, and he recognized that the police force would still face budget challenges. But the bottom line is that these funds helped these police recruits keep their jobs for another year, which can only improve the community and economy of Columbus.

**24. The Fort Wayne, Indiana airport will spend \$1.27 million in stimulus cash for runway signs.**

**Response:** Runway signs are an issue of basic safety for airports. Use of ARRA funds for such signage increases safety for both passengers and crew. As Mayor Tom Henry – D, City of Fort Wayne, Indiana says: “[this is a] project that is specifically and exclusively designed for the safety of the passengers, flight crews and ground crews at Fort Wayne International ...spending money to jumpstart the faltering economy on necessary infrastructure improvements is not pork, it is needed jobs and investment, plus for this project, enhanced safety for Fort Wayne residents and visitors to our city who rely on this airport.”

**25. Akron, Ohio will use up to \$1.5 million to erect a suicide-prevention fence.**

**Response:** Installing this fence addresses a basic safety issue.

**26. Rather than help welfare recipients obtain jobs and escape poverty, \$1 million will be used to study whether 300 people in Chicago are healthier when living in “green” public housing facilities.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**27. The National Institute of Health gives Indiana University professor \$356,000 to study how kids perceive foreign accents.**

**Response:** This basic research project will inform our knowledge of how children perceive accents and how it affects their ability to understand speech. The knowledge gained from this research will be particularly beneficial to children with hearing deficits. The information gained will also add to the larger knowledge base in the field of speech therapy, and the audio recording database will provide a resource that can be useful for future studies of this topic. This research proposal will investigate this issue by testing

children's perception of foreign-accented speech, a common, real-world source of speech variability.

**28. Detroit Public Schools will reap massive benefits from stimulus despite a \$150 million deficit.**

**Response:** The Department of Education (ED) is very well aware of Detroit Public Schools' financial management issues, and has been working with them closely to ensure proper procedures as a result.

**Press Reports:** DPS Emergency Financial Manager Said He Will Not Use Recovery Act Funds to Plug the District's Deficit and Will Be Hiring an Inspector General to Oversee Forensic Audits and Allegations of Financial Wrongdoing in the District. "Detroit Public Schools will soon hire an inspector general to oversee forensic audits and investigate allegations of financial wrongdoing as part of resolving a spiraling deficit, the district's new emergency financial manager said in an interview Thursday. In one of his first interviews since taking office last week, Robert Bobb also told the Free Press that the district's deficit has ballooned to more than \$200 million - far more than the \$139 million announced last year...Decisions also must be made about how to use some of the \$530 million headed to DPS from the federal stimulus package. Bobb said Thursday that he was skeptical that any of the money will come without strings and added that he will not use the stimulus to plug the deficit because that won't solve the structural problems in the budget."<sup>[7]</sup>

**29. Michigan will spend \$983, 952 for streetscaping in Ann Arbor.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**30. "Dead" project in Leelanau County, Michigan gets new life in stimulus aid.**

**Response:** FALSE. This project has been removed from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's project list.

**31. Visitor center and a pedestrian bridge Kansas chosen for "aesthetics" over economics.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**32. A National Forest in Missouri will receive \$462,000 to replace toilets.**

**Response:** MISLEADING. The Forest Service owns and maintains thousands of toilet buildings throughout the National Forest System. As reported in the media, one of these acquisitions involved the \$460,000 purchase and installation of 22 prefabricated concrete

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<sup>[7]</sup> Detroit Free Press, 5/13/09

toilet buildings to be built in remote locations throughout Missouri's Mark Twain National Forest.

At an average of about \$21,000 each, the price reflects the cost of complete constructed buildings rather than cost of the toilets as indicated in the report. The cost of \$9,800 per building was awarded against an existing GSA schedule and is identical to the price the Forest Service paid two years ago for the same units. The negotiated price of \$11,600 per site for excavation, grading, and foundation installation is also in line with what the agency paid two years ago.

**33. Stimulus funds will be used to demolish a sauna and build showers in the women's locker room at Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota.**

**Response:** MISLEADING. The additional showers are necessary to meet the current design standards for the female population at Grand Forks, ND. This project was included in the Department's Recovery Act Expenditure Plan to "Repair Fitness Center Bldg 308 Showers." It was awarded on April 21, 2009 for \$70.3 thousand (13% below original estimate). It demolishes an existing whirlpool and installs six additional showers, required ventilation and plumbing to bring the facility to current standards. The current facility is undersized by 66%.

**34. Federal stimulus cash paying for a fish hatchery and a new visitor center in Missouri.**

**Response:** The existing facility at the Mingo National Wildlife Refuge has significant deferred maintenance and does not meet current codes and standards, so building a replacement facility is a more cost-effective alternative.

The improvements to the Neosho National Fish Hatchery include maintenance improvements, in addition to installing a new renewable energy source that will reduce future operational costs.

**35. \$10 million will be used for school lunch equipment and education technology in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.**

**Response:** States are permitted to use State Fiscal Stabilization funds to restore cuts in state support; districts may not necessarily receive additional funds. This may have the affect of freeing up state funds for other essential public services. While the federal government encourages states to increase the amount available to support education, the statute does not include a supplanting provision.

**36. Missouri plans to spend \$500,000 of federal stimulus money on fish food.**

**Response:** Funding was specifically provided in the Recovery Act for this purpose.

**Press Reports:** Missouri Catfishery Owner Saw Feed Costs Increase 50 Percent from 2007 to 2008; Though He Wasn't "A Big Fan" of the Recovery Act, He Said He Might Apply for the Aid Because the Increase "Is Something Putting a Real Pinch on Our Business." "The United States is about to spend \$50 million on fish food. The money included in the federal stimulus package is intended to help keep afloat an aquaculture industry already struggling from foreign competition after feed prices jumped 50 percent last year...The aquaculture industry was worth \$1.4 billion in sales in 2007, the most recent year for which the U.S. Department of Agriculture has figures. Catfish account for one-third of those sales, and the leading producers are Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas." [5]

**37. Pawtucket, Rhode Island spending \$550,000 on a skateboard park.**

**Response:** FALSE. The CDBG grant proposal submitted by Pawtucket did not contain the skateboard proposal.

**38. Yale and the University of Connecticut are receiving \$850,000 in stimulus for research "to study how paying attention improves performance of difficult tasks."**

**Response:** This research examines neurobiological mechanisms that support the brain's ability to exclude redundant and/or irrelevant information while searching for and locating targets under conditions of attention versus inattention. This is basic research which focuses on the neurons within a specific area of the brain. The knowledge gained from this study could lead to better understanding of disabilities involving impaired attention, and secondarily, to commercial applications such as treatments to improve attention under occupational stress.

**39. Gloversville, New York is using \$175,000 of stimulus money to pay for a trolley bus to take tourists to festivals and a farmers market.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**40. \$3.1 million will turn a canal barge into a floating museum.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**41. Three million dollars will pay for corporate jet runways in Massachusetts despite opposition of local leaders.**

**Response:** Still under review.

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[5] Associated Press State & Local Wire, 6/12/09

**42. Maine to spend over \$1.3 million on “government arts jobs,” including \$30,000 for basket makers, \$20,000 for story telling, and \$12,500 for a music festival.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**43. New York City will spend \$15 million to rebuild sections of the Coney Island Boardwalk.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**44. A New York laboratory is receiving \$150 million in stimulus cash for “world’s brightest x-ray,” but it won’t be available until 2015.**

**Response:** The \$150 million will create over 200 local construction jobs on Long Island in this fiscal year that would not have been created until the following year, providing short-term economic relief to Long Island families. Construction has already begun.

In addition to creating jobs as rapidly as possible, these Recovery Act funds represent an investment in renewed science and technology leadership, enabling discoveries and breakthroughs that will spur U.S. innovation and economic growth in the years ahead. When completed in 2015, NSLS-II will provide American scientists with world-leading capability in one of the most internationally competitive areas of science—advanced lights sources—which have become the state-of-the-art instruments for effecting major advances in materials science, energy, pharmaceuticals and health, and a range of other fields.

**45. Milford, Massachusetts plans to use \$3.5 million for a three mile bike/walking trail despite its failure to spend \$80 million in federal funds for other pedestrian paths.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**46. Stimulus funds pay for a hybrid car to be used by Vermont student drivers.**

**Response:** FALSE. No application has been received from the Town of Colchester for this program.

**47. Rochester, New York is getting millions to extend an art trail.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**48. The National Institutes of Health is giving Yale University \$680,100 in stimulus funds to study the effectiveness of diet and exercise at reducing obesity.**

**Response:** This is a clinical study to examine the efficacy of a behavioral intervention for weight management, through nutrition and exercise, for schizophrenic patients. This intervention has been adapted for mentally ill patients from an approach widely used in

the broader population. The intervention has already been found effective in a smaller sample of mentally ill patients and is now being tested in a larger sample.

**49. No. 1 priority for Bethlehem, Pennsylvania’s share of the stimulus cash: A parking garage.**

**Response:** MISLEADING. This project would be funded under CDBG grants funds, and no funds have been approved yet.

**Press Reports: Local Business Owner: “We’ve Done Customer Surveys and 25 Percent of Them Say That They Would Come More Often If There Was Better Parking.”** The same article that Sen. Coburn’s office includes quotes from local business owners who recognize the link between available parking and increased business: “‘It’s true,’ said Dana DeVito, general manager at Moravian Book Shop. ‘We’ve done customer surveys, and 25 percent of them say that they would come more often if there was better parking.’”<sup>[9]</sup>

**50. Rochester, New York to spend \$1 million grant on “green” upgrades, but will not create new jobs.**

**Response:** FALSE. No application has yet been received from the City of Rochester to date for these funds.

**51. City favors stimulus money over other federal grant to avoid matching requirement.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**52. Altoona, Pennsylvania is getting \$819,000 for a homelessness prevention program despite local reports that the town may not have enough of a homelessness problem to use it.**

**Response:** FALSE. Altoona’s publicly available Consolidated Plan for their HUD formula programs shows that during the course of the year there are several hundred homeless persons in the city and that they also have persons who are at risk of homelessness. The Homeless Prevention/Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) funds in the Recovery Act were allocated to grantees via a formula; grantees did not apply. However, grantees are required to accept the funds by submitting a spending plan. The HPRP Notice indicates that that if grantees do not have the capacity to administer the funds or don’t need them, they should simply decline and the funds would be reallocated to other communities. Also, HPRP funds are largely intended to prevent homelessness, not necessarily correct a chronic homelessness problem. It can be used to assist folks that are at risk of losing their homes due to job loss or the inability to make mortgage payments.

**53. \$2 million in stimulus cash will be used to monitor scallop reproduction and habitat.**

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<sup>[9]</sup> Morning Call (Allentown, PA), 4/2/09

**Response:** MISLEADING. No grants under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's coastal habitat restoration program have been awarded to date.

**54. Nantucket, Massachusetts will spend \$5.6 million in stimulus cash to resurface 6.4 miles of road and bike path, or roughly \$875,000 a mile.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**55. The Tennessee Department of Transportation plans to use money to create the Clement Railroad Hotel Museum.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**56. Despite a history of mismanaging federal funds, D.C. Metro will receive hundreds of millions to close its budget deficit.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**57. \$77.5 million will be used to extend the consistently over-budget D.C. subway to Dulles Airport in Virginia.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**58. Wheeling, West Virginia will use almost \$400,000 to renovate a downtown music hall.**

**Response:** MISLEADING. This project would be funded under the CDBG grant program, and no CDBG grants have been awarded yet. As stated by Mayor Andy McKenzie (R), of Wheeling: "... Wheeling City Council by a unanimous vote authorized CDBG –R investment into the Capitol Theatre project to stimulate economic growth, job creation and downtown revitalization. This eligible shovel ready project will create 5.6 million dollars in direct spending in our community and more than 60 new jobs...this project that will be a catalyst for future investments in our community."

**59. Delaware has received a \$7.5 million federal stimulus grant to pay for a boardwalk revival.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**60. Memphis, Tennessee will spend \$1.5 million to redevelop fairgrounds and \$250,000 to rehabilitate a dilapidated laundromat.**

**Response:** MISLEADING. This project would be funded under the CDBG grant program, and no CDBG grants have been awarded yet.

**61. Texas Department of Transportation plans to spend \$181 million on a new road opposed by local environmentalists.**

**Response:** Still under review.

- 62. Despite promises that citizens would be able to track “every dime” of the \$787 billion stimulus bill, the federal website devoted to posting the spending details may not be complete until next spring.**

**Response:** FALSE. As can be read in this article at GovExec.com ([http://www.govexec.com/story\\_page.cfm?articleid=42866&dcn=todaysnews](http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=42866&dcn=todaysnews)), the Board feels they are on schedule to meet the statutory deadline.

- 63. Delaware will spend \$400,000 to construct a berth for a historic ship to attract tourists.**

**Response:** Still under review.

- 64. Stimulus to pay for housing used by Soyono the Sumatran tiger and Luke the Lion at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.**

**Response:** Still under review.

- 65. Washington, North Carolina is using stimulus funds to pay for “project-funding manager” whose job it is to secure even more stimulus funds.**

**Response:** Still under review.

- 66. Summerfield, North Carolina gets stimulus money for a parking lot.**

**Response:** Still under review. A comment from Mayor Mark Brown (R), of Summerfield, North Carolina: “For several years, local government has been grappling with how to improve the safety at the Summerfield Rail Trail. Without sufficient parking so close to the start of the trail, this trailhead is a dangerous traffic accident waiting to happen. This Recovery funding will put people to work and expand the number of safe, parking spaces available.”

- 67. The Florida Department of Transportation plans to spend \$128 million on the proposed Indian Street Bridge, though it does not yet have all the property it needs.**

**Response:** Still under review.

- 68. USDA Inspector General (IG) raises concerns about a \$2.5 billion program for rural broadband Internet service.**

**Response:** No funds have yet gone out for the Broadband program, and IG concerns will be taken into account.

- 69. Miami, Florida will use \$2.1 million in stimulus funds to move and relocate an aging Greyhound bus terminal.**

**Response:** This intermodal transit project has been widely acclaimed. See <http://www.bizjournals.com/southflorida/stories/2009/03/02/daily64.html>

**70. Lexington, Kentucky plans to spend \$4.7 million on a trail connecting downtown with a horse farm.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**71. Steam rooms in the fitness center of Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas will undergo repairs funded by federal stimulus funds.**

**Response:** FALSE. This project was not funded with Recovery Act funds.

**72. The federal government will provide \$300 million in stimulus funds to 61 housing agencies that have been repeatedly faulted by auditors for mishandling government.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**73. Large federal contractors who have paid big fines for violating environmental, safety, and discrimination rules are receiving stimulus funds.**

**Response:** CACI is one of the 100 biggest federal contractors overall. USAspending.gov reports that CACI received \$1.5B in FY 2008. The Forest Service contract in question represents one-tenth of one percent of the 2008 level awarded to the company.

To meet the rigorous transparency and accountability standards reflected in OMB guidance, the Forest Service has created four Economic Recovery Operations Centers (EROCs) through which all contracts, grants, and agreements funded by the ARRA are processed. Through these Centers, the Forest Service uses competitive procurement procedures for all ARRA awards. Exceptions can only be approved by the agency's senior procurement official. The contract will assist the Forest Service conduct operations at their EROCs. The contract was awarded on a competitive basis.

**74. Dallas, Texas will receive stimulus funds to build a downtown park over a freeway.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**75. Bathrooms a major feature of \$11.3 million renovation at Somerville Lake, Texas.**

**Response:** FALSE. Of the \$11.3 million slated for renovation, only \$400,000 is for restrooms, the majority is for modernization camping loops.

**76. Virginia will spend \$340,000 on a rural bridge that carries only 20 cars a day.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**77. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources will spend \$1.7 million to grow oysters.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**78. Stimulus program paying \$2.5 million for beach enhancement studies.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**79. Washington State University (Vancouver) is receiving \$148, 438 to analyze “the use of marijuana in conjunction with medications like morphine.”**

**Response:** Still under review.

**80. “Microsoft Bridge” in Seattle will receive \$11 million in stimulus funds.**

**Response:** MISLEADING. As Sen. Coburn knows, because Gov. Gregoire informed him by mail last month, the bridge in question is using less than half of these funds. It is an important local development project. Mayor John Marchione (Non-partisan), of Redmond, says: “The 36th Street Bridge project is a vital transportation investment needed to improve mobility and circulation for an area that is home to over 44,000 jobs and represents the second largest employment center in King County after downtown Seattle. It was the region’s consensus top priority after a rigorous competitive review, and we were pleased to receive stimulus funding for this important jobs corridor.”

**81. California is not encouraging school districts to re-hire laid-off teachers.**

**Response:** The funds mentioned in the article are related to the release of Title I and IDEA funds, which were not intended to enable districts to retain staff. California received its SFSF funds, which are intended to allow districts to retain teachers.

The other 2 items have to do with States or Districts choosing not to spend ARRA dollars on teacher retention because they are worried about the funding cliff. The first priority of State Fiscal Stabilization Funds is to address state budget shortfalls – so if there are teachers being laid off, the money is intended to be used to retain them. Once state budget shortfalls have been addressed, then the Department of Education are encouraging states to spend the money on investments rather than expansion that cannot be sustained post-ARRA.

**82. Oregon will spend \$4.2 million to raise railroad track 18 inches.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**83. Portland, Oregon will spend \$1 million in stimulus funds for bike lockers.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**84. Stimulus cash is causing friction between a Colorado county sheriff and commissioner.**

**Response:** FALSE. This issue has been resolved by the Mesa County Commissioners, who have voted to approve a host of projects, including expansion of a county jail.

**85. A Wyoming town will build a new government building that local officials do not see helping the economy in the short-term.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**86. The U.S. Department of the Interior will spend \$280 million on wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries, \$630,000 on a bridge at the National Bison Range, and \$249,000 for solar panels at Ennis Fish Hatchery.**

**Response:** The Bridge at the National Bison Range does not meet standards and has become a safety hazard to people. This is a deferred maintenance project.

In addition to installing a new renewable energy source that generate 75% of the station's electricity use and reduce future operational costs, the improvements to the Ennis National Fish Hatchery also include maintenance improvements.

**87. Colorado counties reject stimulus money, but change minds and use to buy an industrial dishwasher.**

**Response:** FALSE. Per the Colorado Recovery Act office, the four counties will use the nearly \$17,000 for meals served to low-income seniors. Recovery Act dollars will not be spent on equipment, such as a dishwasher. Colorado, like much of the nation, has seen a 30 percent increase in demand for emergency food during the recession and the Recovery Act is paying to meet the increased need.

**88. Tualatin, Oregon plans to spend \$2.5 million on a "train-horn-free" zone.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**89. San Diego International Airport will get \$5 million to install "energy-efficient" runway guidance lights.**

**Response:** Funding for San Diego Airport Will Pay for Improved Runway Safety Lights and Energy-Efficient Signs of the Airfield. According to the very article cited in the report, the "federal funds will cover the installation of new energy-efficient signs on the

airfield and improved runway safety lights.”<sup>[3]</sup> Mayor Jerry Sanders (R) of San Diego comments on the project: “These lights and signage will improve safety at Lindbergh Field by reducing the likelihood of accidents on the tarmac... this project is, in fact, an appropriate use of stimulus funds as it will put nearly 100 people to work during the installation process.”

**90. A Utah sheriff’s office is plans to purchase a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.**

**Response:** JAG funds can be used to pay for personnel, overtime, and equipment. For example, Recovery-JAG funds may be used to purchase police cruisers (whether marked or unmarked), as well as police motorcycles. While known to many as a manufacturer of motorcycles built for leisurely purposes, Harley Davidson has been a primary supplier of American Law Enforcement motorcycles for over 100 years. More than 3,400 police departments ride Harley-Davidson motorcycles in the U.S. alone.

**91. The Phoenix Police Department is expecting to receive \$5.4 million in stimulus cash for new equipment that will not result in job creation.**

**Response:** These reports are inaccurate. According to Maricopa County’s own application for the funds, the city of Phoenix does intend to use the Recovery Act JAG funds to hire staff in the prosecutors and fire department offices, not for equipment.

**92. U.S.-Canada border crossings that average less than 2 passenger cars per day and 2-3 trucks a month get millions from stimulus funds. U.S.-Mexico border crossings with 20,000 vehicle crossings per day get nothing.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**93. Washington State will spend over \$18 million in stimulus cash to grow and hatch fish.**

**Response:** The Bureau of Reclamation is investing \$18.1 million in the Leavenworth Water System – Columbia Basin Project. This project will complete repairs at Leavenworth.

Beginning in the fall 2009, hatchery system improvements at Leavenworth will rebuild the water intake system which includes the pumping plant, fish screen and pipeline, and an effluent pond. An operations and maintenance evaluation concluded the system is in imminent threat of failure, with the potential to shut down hatchery operations. Shut down would affect Endangered Species Act-listed brood stock production, Reclamation’s ability to meet Grand Coulee mitigation requirements, and the 2008 Federal Columbia

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<sup>[3]</sup> “Lindbergh runways awarded \$5 million,” SignOnSanDiego.com (*Union-Tribune*), March 28, 2009, <http://www3.signonsandiego.com/stories/2009/mar/28/lm28airport234819-lindbergh-runways-awarded-5-mill/>.

River Power System (FCRPS) Biological Opinion. Completion of this critical water delivery system would ensure continuation of hatchery operations, which supports spring Chinook salmon and continue to ensure tribal Coho fishing opportunities for Yakama and Colville Tribes. Project completion would also resolve ongoing legal disputes, address growing safety issues associated with difficult O&M of the current system, and reduce operating costs.

**94. Montana’s state-run liquor warehouse will receive \$2.2 million in stimulus cash to install skylights.**

**Response:** The skylights at the warehouse will save taxpayers money. See the following analysis from ProPublica:

“Projects like Montana’s liquor warehouse could provide fodder for stimulus critics, but it’s actually just a continuation of a twenty-year-old program designed to save the state money by reducing energy consumption.

“If light can be reflected in through the windows, we save money,” Steven Swanson, the distilled spirits manager at the warehouse, told us. The state of Montana has been in the liquor distribution business [6] since prohibition ended, and brought in about \$100 million last year. The warehouse is just one of the many state-owned buildings [1] in line for cost-saving energy improvements.

Montana’s Gov. Brian Schweitzer has launched an initiative [7] to cut the state government’s energy use by 20 percent before next year. To achieve that “20x10” goal, the state hastened “audits” to plan and design energy-saving renovation in older buildings, like the 30-year-old liquor warehouse, throughout 2008, creating a backlog of projects that were simply awaiting funding, Paul Cartwright, the governor’s adviser on energy issues told us.

Last fall, Schweitzer [8], a Democrat, proposed a budget that included about \$25 million to pay for renovations. But, as the financial crisis deepened that figure was repeatedly down-sized in the administration’s proposals to the state legislature. That is, until the stimulus package arrived on the doorstep.”

**95. Eugene, Oregon will spend \$2.25 million stimulus dollars to construct a 1,000 foot long bike path, and an additional \$180,000 will be spent on “pedestrian facilities, traffic calming and bicycle-related components.**

**Response:** Still under review.

**96. A California skate park will get a \$620,000 “facelift.”**

**Response:** MISLEADING. This project would be funded under the CDBG grant program, and no CDBG grants have been awarded yet.

**97. The Bureau of Land Management is using stimulus funds to study the impact wind farms have on the sage grouse population in Oregon.**

**Response:** BLM is using Recovery Act funds to complete environmental reviews and other studies needed before public lands can be used for various renewable energy projects. Funding these studies now will accelerate the permitting process.

Sage grouse have been proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act, so these studies can help BLM develop mitigation and avoidance plans that are needed for BLM to approve permits for wind and other renewable projects.

**98. Durango, Colorado to spend \$215,000 for a bike path to keep kids from walking to school on the street.**

**Response:** This new bicycle and pedestrian path will be built in front of a high school and will keep students off the roadway and away from vehicle traffic. This project creates jobs and a safer infrastructure for the entire community.

**99. \$200,000 for restroom and showers at Black Butte Lake, California.**

**Response:** A new restroom will be installed in the Black Butte Lake, Buckhorn Recreation Area Group Use Area to replace a single, aging pit toilet. The area is reserved every weekend between April and September and can accommodate up to 200 users. The nearest waterborne restroom with showers is located close to 1/2 mile from the group use area in the main campground. When the group area is utilized it puts a greater stress on this waterborne restroom and contributes to overcrowded conditions, facility breakdowns, less than desirable cleanliness and waiting lines. This restroom was constructed in 1978.

**100. Big Stimulus Windfall for Tiny Town.**

**Response:** FALSE. This system is not receiving ARRA funds.