

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) expressed strong opposition to a bloated spending bill passed today by the House of Representatives that would cut approximately \$158 million from Florida's transportation priorities. The cut was part of the fiscal year 2008 Transportation-Housing appropriations bill, which passed the House by a vote of 270 to 147. President Bush is expected to veto the measure later this week.

"It's unfortunate that leaders in Congress have chosen to cut Florida's transportation funding to pay for projects like a 'Peace Garden' in North Dakota, a baseball field in Montana and streetscape improvements in Los Angeles' Fashion District," Buchanan said. "As a member of the House Transportation Committee, I intend to work with all the members of Florida's congressional delegation to ensure that our state gets its fair share of federal transportation dollars."

Amid the massive spending bill was \$3.075 million in area priorities successfully secured by Buchanan. These projects include:

- \$1 million increase capacity at the I-75 and University Parkway interchange – the busiest and most congested interchange in the Sarasota/Manatee area;
 - \$500,000 to reduce congestion and improve safety on I-75 in Manatee and Sarasota counties;
 - \$500,000 to widen US 41 from SR-776 to the City of North Port, modify intersections, upgrade traffic signals, and improve drainage;
 - \$500,000 to help Sarasota County Area Transit expand its fuel efficient fleet to better support areas of residential and employment density and promote regional economic development;
 - \$375,000 to help renovate and restore the Robert Taylor Community Center in Sarasota;
- and,
- \$200,000 to help renovate and expand the Family Services Center in Charlotte County.

"While I am proud to have secured these funds for important community facilities and transportation projects throughout the 13th District, I cannot support a bill that puts pork ahead of Florida's transportation needs," Buchanan concluded. "I'll support the president's veto in order to protect Florida's taxpayers from Washington's wasteful spenders."