

WASHINGTON – President Bush today signed into law a new federal highway bill that includes U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell's technical correction that allows Arizona to receive a higher federal share of funds for much-needed road projects.

Mitchell's efforts on H.R. 1195 fixed a 2005 Highway bill passed by the previous Congress that allowed only six states – Alaska, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon and South Dakota – to receive a higher share for certain federally funded highway projects.

“Arizona should have been entitled to the higher share as well, and now it is,” said Mitchell, who serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. “It was a matter of basic fairness.”

The House passed H.R. 1195 on April 29 by a 358 to 51 vote. Mitchell had been working to secure the fix since March of 2007.

Arizona Left Out of Key Provision of 2005 Highway Bill

In 2005, when the previous Congress passed the last highway bill, it allowed only six states – Alaska, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon and South Dakota – to receive a higher federal share for certain federally funded highway projects. Arizona was left off of the list, despite the fact that it ranks third in the nation in public lands. The higher federal share is supposed to assist states with large amounts of public lands, which often have a harder time raising local funding for highway projects.

H.R. 1195 strikes the 2005 language, allowing Arizona and other states with large amounts of public lands, to receive the higher federal shares to which they should be entitled.

Costs for federally funded highway projects are typically shared among federal, state and local sources. Without eligibility for a higher federal share, Arizona's cost-share tripled from 5.7 percent to 20 percent, costing state and local governments millions of dollars for projects across the state in order to be eligible for federal funding.

Mitchell Uses Seat on Transportation Committee to Gain Fix

March 2007

Mitchell offers an amendment to H.R. 1195 to add Arizona to the list of states authorized to receive a higher federal share and secures Chairman Jim Oberstar's commitment to work with him on the federal share as H.R. 1195 goes forward. H.R. 1195 is approved by Committee on March 21, 2007 by voice vote and approved by the House on March 26, 2007 by voice vote.

July 2007

Mitchell is appointed to House-Senate Conference Committee which considers H.R. 1195. Conference agrees to change H.R. 1195 to address Mitchell's concerns, and allow Arizona to receive a higher federal share.

March 2008

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works approves modified version of H.R. 1195, including Rep. Mitchell's change, on March 7.

April 2008

Senate approves modified version of H.R. 1195, including Mitchell's change, by a vote of 88 to 2 on April 17.

House approves modified version of H.R. 1195, including Mitchell's change by a vote of 358 to 51 on April 30.

June 2008

President Bush signs H.R. 1195 into law.

Mitchell is the first Arizonan to serve on the House Transportation Committee in a decade.