

SCOTTSDALE – U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today joined officials from the Arizona Department of Transportation to review the department’s bridge inspection process as Mitchell’s committee readies to examine the nation’s structurally deficient bridges in early September.

“Making sure our infrastructure is safe and well-maintained is critically important, especially in a growing state like Arizona, and I’m going to continue to work to make sure that we get our fair share of federal dollars,” said Mitchell.

On September 5, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, of which Mitchell is a member, will hold a hearing on the nation’s bridges.

Arizona has 7248 total bridges, 161 of which are structurally deficient. There are no structurally deficient bridges in Arizona’s fifth congressional district.

Since joining Congress in January, Mitchell has effectively used his seat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to push for Arizona to receive its fair share of federal infrastructure resources. He has also secured funding for high-priority transportation projects in Phoenix, Mesa, Tempe and Scottsdale. [Source: [Mitchell Web site](#) , July 24, 2007]

Mitchell has also worked to change federal funding formulas to secure Arizona’s fair share of funding. Earlier this month, H.R. 3248, a change sought by Mitchell to allow Arizona to receive a higher federal share for certain highway projects, passed the House by a 422 to 1 vote. [Sources: [Mitchell Web site](#) , Aug. 1, 2007; [East Valley Tribune](#) , Aug. 6, 2007; [Roll Call No. 789](#)]

Two weeks ago, Mitchell and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee passed H.R. 3224, the Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2007, which authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Administration to provide grants for the rehabilitation and repair of publicly-owned dams.

According to a 2006 Arizona Department of Water Resources study, Arizona has 16 “unsafe dams with potentially imminent risk of failure.” The state agency estimated that rehabilitating those dams would cost between \$97 million and \$242 million.

A large majority of Arizona’s more than 500 dams, such as the Dreamy Draw Dam, are located around heavily populated areas. If these dams stop working or become damaged, Arizonans would be threatened by floods or dangerous disruptions of vital water resources.