

Minneapolis Mayor Rybak meets with Obama transition team

Written by

Monday, 19 January 2009 16:54

[Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak](#) recently met with President-elect Barack Obama and members of Obama's economic team in Washington, DC about the urgent need for a national economic recovery package. The meeting was held in conjunction with a speech the President-elect Obama delivered about his proposed [American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan](#).

Rybak was one of a small group of mayors selected from across the country who were invited to hear about and provide feedback on Obama's economic recovery plan. Rybak and the other mayors were especially interested in Obama's efforts to rebuild America's transportation infrastructure and provide direct aid to help struggling state and local governments maintain critical needs like public safety and education.

"Obama's message to us was that 'help is on the way' for cities and states like ours that are struggling during this economic and financial turmoil," Rybak said. "Even before taking office, President-elect Obama clearly understands the need to invest immediately to limit job loss and spur economic recovery."

Rybak said he was especially pleased to hear Obama recognize the need to keep critical employees like police officers, fire fighters and teachers in place during a time of budget cuts.

"With states like ours facing deep budget deficits, federal aid would help to keep more cops on the street and teachers in the classroom," Rybak said. "I'm glad that President-elect Obama is reaching out to mayors and governors to help develop this economic recovery plan. We understand that 'Main Street' needs help now and we believe that the best way to do that is with direct aid to cities and local governments."

Rybak also used the meeting with Obama's team to reinforce that he believes economic investments should be used to promote transit and sustainability, as well as help build the new green economy.

"An immediate economic stimulus must also set us up for strong long term growth," Rybak said. "Because President-elect Obama is pushing for transit investments and green jobs as part of this plan, not only can we re-build our nation's crippling transportation infrastructure, we can also build a new green economy and get off our addiction to oil. In Minneapolis, we were able to rebuild the collapsed I-35W Bridge quickly, while also insist on creating capacity for a future

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transit line on it. We showed how to act fast, and act responsibly for the long term.”