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Obama praises \$50 billion transportation plan

Washington – On Monday, President Obama called for Republican support for an increase in spending on transportation projects. The president claimed that this spending plan would create jobs for the middle class and would serve as an investment in the country's foundation.

In a Rose Garden event Obama said "There's no reason why we can't do this. There's no reason why the world's best infrastructure should lie beyond our borders. This is America. We've always had the best infrastructure ... All we need is the political will."

Obama's proposal calls for \$50 billion in expenditures as the first step in a six-year transportation program. The plan proposes building and repairing thousands of miles of roads, airport runways, and rail lines. It also covers the installation of a new air navigation system designed to reduce travel delays.

The president introduced the plan on Labor Day. The president stood with governors, mayors, transportation officials, and Cabinet secretaries before cameras as he made his announcement.

Eager to exhibit progress in turning around the sluggish economy prior to the Nov. 2 elections, Obama called for Republican support. Although the president indicated that this type of infrastructure work usually draws bipartisan support, it is not likely that cooperation will occur in the current partisan environment.

Obama indicated that his program would boost employment which is suffering from a reduction of 159,000 public sector jobs in September. It would also make up for what he termed as years of inattention to the country's infrastructure.

"Everywhere else, they're thinking big. They're creating jobs today, but they're also playing to win tomorrow," Obama said of some of the top economic competitors to the United States. "So the bottom line is our shortsightedness has come due. We can no longer afford to sit still."

According to an administration analysis, middle-class jobs in construction, manufacturing, and retail would be helped by Obama's plan.