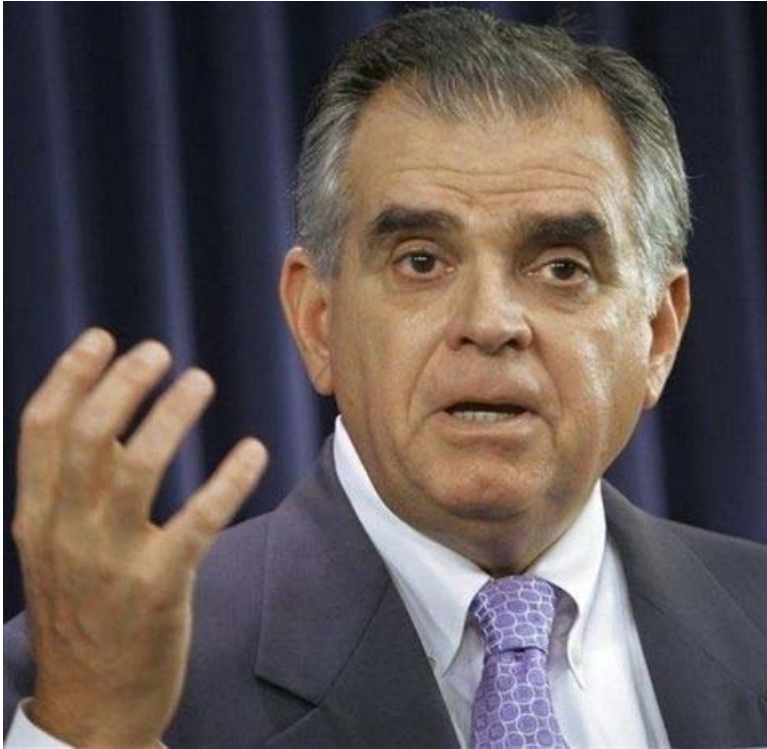


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U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood (AP Photo/Seth Perlman, File)

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LaHood: "\$500-600 billion" needed for road, bridge improvements

Brett Blume Reporting

STE. GENEVIEVE, Mo. (KMOX) -- So far, Missouri has received and spent more than a quarter-billion dollars in stimulus funding to rebuild roads and bridges across the state.

But with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act scheduled to wrap up by the end of this year, U.S. Transportation secretary Ray LaHood says it's time to think about the next phase in funding new construction projects.

"Everybody agrees on what needs to be done for America in terms of building roads, fixing up our bridges, more transit," LaHood said. "The only thing we need to do is find 5- to 6-hundred billion dollars."

He's now pushing for Congress to come up with some or all of that money in a new transportation bill.

LaHood made his comments Friday during dedication ceremonies for the giant new cement plant in Ste. Genevieve County, which will pump out more than 4 million metric tons of product each year.

He calls the plant an ongoing legacy of the Recovery Act.

"The concrete that's produced here will be spread all over America," LaHood said. "So it not only produces jobs for this part of the country, but there will be jobs all over America for these people that will be pouring this concrete."

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