

## Pelosi: 200 Years After Gallatin Project, We Must Again Invest in Our Infrastructure

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*Washington, D.C. – Speaker Nancy Pelosi spoke on the House floor this afternoon to express her support of H. Res. 936, honoring the 200th anniversary of the Gallatin Report on Roads and Canals and recognizing the vast contributions that national planning efforts have provided to the United States. Below are the Speaker’s remarks:*

“Two hundred years ago, around the time of the Lewis and Clark expeditions and the Louisiana Purchase, a great president realized that for commerce to flow in America, for people to move, and for our country to flourish, we needed to build the infrastructure of our country.

“Mr. DeFazio described the immensity of that project, designed by Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury under President Thomas Jefferson. Secretary Gallatin said at the time that his vision of roads and canals to unite our young nation could not be ‘left to individual exertion.’ Contrary to the popular thinking of the time, Gallatin had the great foresight to see that the long-term benefit of these infrastructure investments far outweighed the costs, and because of that, public capital, and not just private resources were necessary.

“From the beginning of our country, our founders and the leaders of our country were entrepreneurs. They were risk takers. They believed in public-private partnerships, and that’s what this was.

“At the beginning of the 19th century, it’s important to note there were barely 1,000 miles of canals in America. Sixty years later, in part because of the vision of Albert Gallatin, more than 4,200 miles of canals, ranging west to Illinois, north to Michigan, and south to Texas, which facilitated trade and mobility across our country. The Erie Canal, the transcontinental railway, and America’s model of planning and investment stand today as legacies of Albert Gallatin’s vision. A statue of Albert Gallatin stands today at the entrance to the Treasury building in recognition of his many accomplishments.

“It is in the tradition of Albert Gallatin that 100 years later, in 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt launched a similar commitment by convening a White House Conference on Conservation to preserve America’s natural beauty. That led to the creation of the National

Park Service and helped a growing America remain a great America and continue to be an even greater America.

"In 2008, 200 years after Thomas Jefferson and Secretary Gallatin, 100 years after Theodore Roosevelt, in keeping with the traditions of visionary leaders like them, we are prepared to invest in America's strength. We again must invest in our infrastructure to do so. Today, that means green solutions, such as mass transit, and modern solutions, such as expanding broadband across America. Whether we're talking about roads or bridges or mass transit, whether we're talking about canals and waterways, sewage and water facilities, whether we're talking about broadband, or we're talking about the grid to transmit electricity, whether we're talking about schools, an investment in infrastructure that serves the needs of our children and their education, all of this infrastructure needs a major infusion of capital and we would want to do that in a fiscally sound way.

"Just as they did 200 years ago, these infrastructure investments offer our nation job-creating opportunities to reinvigorate the American economy. Anything we're talking about in terms of infrastructure means good paying jobs right here at home in America. It's not only about creating those jobs, it's about growing our economy.

"Today, because of the leadership of Mr. Oberstar, the distinguished chair of the committee, Mr. DeFazio, who opened the debate, Mr. Duncan, thank you as well, and the leadership of Congressman Earl Blumenauer, Congress has the opportunity to honor the genius of the Gallatin plan in, as the resolution says, 'establishing a more perfect union.'

"Mr. Speaker, I urge recognition of Secretary Albert Gallatin, who with his plan encouraged the prosperity and national unity of America."