



## PARTNERSHIP TO Save Highway Communities

### Kirk Legislation Jeopardizes Highway Businesses, Threatens Jobs

**ALEXANDRIA, Va. – June 22, 2011** –A bill unveiled this week threatens thousands of businesses operating at the exits along the nation’s Interstate Highway System, jeopardizing the jobs of more than 2 million Americans, a coalition of highway businesses said today. The legislation, authored by Senator Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), would permit the states to sell food and fuel from interstate rest areas.

The Partnership to Save Highway Communities said that Senator Kirk’s legislation would pull the rug out from under the nation’s interstate-based fast food franchisees, convenience stores, gas stations and truck stops at a time when the businesses are just starting to see signs of recovery from the recession.

“This legislation does nothing more than grant state governments a monopoly directly on the interstate shoulder or median. The right-of-way location of the commercial rest areas gives the state a major advantage over the businesses at the exit,” said Lisa Mullings, President and CEO of NATSO, a member of the coalition representing truck stops. “On interstates where there are commercial rest areas, there are 50 percent fewer businesses at the exits. By changing this law, the government isn’t creating any new demand from travelers for hamburgers or gasoline. They are simply transferring sales from exits to state rest areas.”

Small towns and counties are benefactors, with interstate exit businesses paying more than \$600 million a year to local governments, helping to fund schools, police and fire departments and other local services. The Kirk legislation will result in town and county governments seeing some of their top taxpayers threatened, potentially transferring state budget woes onto local governments.

The groups contend that Congress effectively privatized interstate services in the late 50s, by passing legislation that prohibited commercial development of rest areas after 1960. The law successfully encouraged investment at the exits, with some 97,000 small businesses operating today within a quarter-mile of the Interstate Highway System.

To learn more about the Partnership to Save Highway Communities, visit [www.jobnextexit.com](http://www.jobnextexit.com) or follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/SaveHighwayCommunities>.

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*The Partnership to Save Highway Communities is a coalition of associations, corporations, small businesses and other stakeholders that share a common goal: preserving the valuable relationships between interstate highway motorists and community businesses serving their needs. The coalition is dedicated to ensuring that interstate highway rights-of-way remain free of commercial development.*