Wastewater Treatment Plant and Streetscaping Projects That Congressman Helped Secure Show Local Impact of Federal Action

Ellenville, NY --Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today visited the Village of Ellenville to tour a newly completed streetscaping project in Liberty Square for which he secured $296,000 in federal funding. Hinchey also announced that over $7 million dollars in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, which he strongly supported, is providing for the construction of a badly needed wastewater treatment plant that will spare local ratepayers the added financial burden while helping to foster economic development in the village.

"Each time the federal government invests in American infrastructure jobs are created and economic development is allowed to move forward," said Hinchey. "We're seeing those kinds of results here in Ellenville. Not only have we beautified Liberty Square, but we are helping to sustain the small businesses that surround it by improving the water and sewer infrastructure they rely upon. We provided work for people who badly needed it in a down economy, gave people a source of pride in their community, and spared local rate and taxpayers much of the cost. I'm so proud to have helped to secure these federal investments and hope we can do so much more in the future."

Hinchey used his position as a member of the House Appropriations Committee to secure the streetscaping grant in a Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations Bill. Nearly $1 million in additional state and private funds also supported the effort to completely overhaul Liberty Square. The new layout for the square was based on historical documentation and pedestrian flow analysis. Benches, trash receptacles and lighting were also chosen based on historical colors and materials. Open space in front of the library was preserved as a gathering place for concerts and other entertainment and new crosswalks were created to increase pedestrian safety.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also known as the economic stimulus, is providing the majority of the funding for a new wastewater treatment facility in Ellenville, which will soon be constructed. It provided a $1.9 million grant and a $5.2 million low interest loan - both administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Agency. The grant, which will help save considerable money for the community, was made possible because Ellenville is located in a USDA Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) Zone, a designation which Hinchey established in 1999, which gives the village preferential treatment when applying for certain federal grants. Ellenville also benefited from $1.5 million in ARRA money to repair the Beckley Street Bridge, which had been listed as one of the bridges most in need of repair in

New York State.

"These kinds of federal investments make a real impact," said Hinchey. "Both the United States Chamber of Commerce and national labor unions are calling for increased federal investment in infrastructure projects -- and these organizations hardly agree on anything. With one in five construction workers nationwide currently unemployed, now is not the time to be cutting back on these investments. We need to continue strengthening our nation's transportation, water and energy systems. We can't afford to fall behind in the global economy, but unfortunately many in Washington are trying to cut the very programs which funded these projects in Ellenville."

Last week, a Republican led majority voted to dramatically cut rural development programs in the Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriations bill. Energy, water and transportation infrastructure investments are are also slated for cuts. Hinchey supports the opposite approach and is now working to pass the National Infrastructure Development Bank Act of 2011 to establish an infrastructure development bank that would issue bonds and provide financing for infrastructure projects throughout the country.