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## Federal earmarks fund S.C. projects

Spending bill would allot state about \$65 million

*By Raju Chebium*

WASHINGTON -- A spending bill the Senate is considering this week contains at least 84 special projects for South Carolina totaling about \$65 million, an independent analysis shows.

Among the projects in the \$410 billion bill: \$95,000 to expand Salters Road along Interstate 85, \$150,000 for data terminals for the Greenville Police Department and \$1.4 million for Clemson University's Cyber-Institute. The institute is designed to make the university a high-tech powerhouse.

The bill, which the House passed last week, would fund the federal government through the current fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30. It is expected to also pass in the Senate, although it has reignited a congressional debate over special projects -- called earmarks -- in spending bills.

Six of South Carolina's eight members of Congress sponsored earmarks in the legislation, according to Taxpayers for Common Sense, a Washington-based watchdog group.

Sen. Jim DeMint and Rep. Joe Wilson, both South Carolina Republicans, did not request any.

"Each of these projects was requested by South Carolinians who identified a need and made a compelling case to receive federal funding," Democratic Rep. Jim Clyburn, majority whip and the third most powerful House member, said in a statement.

He requested 27 projects totaling nearly \$36 million, making him the most prolific seeker of earmarks among South Carolina's House members.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., requested 37 earmarks, according to the watchdog group. Rep. Bob Inglis, R-Travelers Rest, requested seven.

Taxpayers for Common Sense found nearly 9,000 earmarks totaling \$7.7 billion in the legislation. According to the group's analysis, the South Carolina earmarks include funding for highway projects, universities, and state and local governments.

In the blog he writes on his Senate Web site, DeMint urged President Barack Obama to veto the spending bill. He noted that while campaigning for president, Obama supported DeMint's proposal to ban all earmarks.

"This is (a) real test for our president and I hope he helps leads the fight against this wasteful and corrupting earmark system," DeMint wrote.

Some South Carolina earmarks in the \$410 billion spending bill and their sponsors:

— \$10 million for the Lake Marion Regional Water Agency to install water lines (Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C.)

— \$9.2 million for the Charleston Harbor (Rep. Henry Brown, R-S.C.)

— \$2.6 million to buy land for Congaree National Park (Clyburn and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.)

— \$951,500 for Clemson University's Cellulosic Biofuel Plant in Charleston (Reps. J. Gresham Barrett, R-Westminster, and Bob Inglis, R-Travelers Rest).

— \$285,000 for state Route 9 interchange improvements in Spartanburg (Inglis)

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