

The economic stimulus bill passed by the U.S. House on Wednesday was indeed big - and potentially means billions of dollars for Nebraska and Iowa.

Nebraska over two years would receive nearly \$1.2 billion under the bill's primary spending provisions, according to a preliminary state-by-state analysis. Iowa would receive \$1.9 billion.

Included in those figures are hundreds of millions of dollars in general budget support to help the states weather the nation's fiscal storm and hundreds of millions for roads and other infrastructure projects.

The analysis, prepared for the National Conference of State Legislatures and National Governors Association, does not include how much in tax cuts or incentives individuals and businesses would expect to receive under the plan.

It also does not break down all the stimulus spending programs, including aid intended to increase rural broadband service and streamline health records.

But it does give an idea of the magnitude of dollars being talked about as the House, Senate and President Barack Obama hammer out a stimulus plan.

"It's a very fluid situation," said Michelle Blackston, a Creighton University graduate who is spokesman for the NCSL in Washington.

Nebraska's House delegation joined all their Republican colleagues in voting against the bill Wednesday. Rep. Lee Terry said the bill would bloat government and add to the national debt.

"To get our country out of the current economic catastrophe, we must boost business incentives and create jobs immediately," he said in a statement.

According to the analysis, Nebraska would receive \$377 million in general budget assistance under the bill, intended to support state budgets at a time of plummeting revenue. Language in the bill earmarks almost two-thirds of that for K-12 schools and universities, but the state would have discretion to spend other dollars.

There would also be an additional \$168 million to offset Nebraska costs in the Medicaid medical assistance program, freeing up more state dollars.

Specific infrastructure money for Nebraska in the bill would include \$230 million for road

construction, \$51 million for sewer and water projects and \$65 million for K-12 school construction and technology. Nebraska has identified at least \$370 million in road projects that are ready to go if stimulus dollars are received.

There would also be \$91 million for energy improvements in Nebraska and \$19 million for law enforcement grants.

