

## **Johnson Statement on Semiannual Monetary Policy Report**

**WASHINGTON** – Today, Senate Banking Committee Chairman Tim Johnson (D-SD) held a hearing on the Federal Reserve Bank’s Semiannual Monetary Report to the Congress. The Committee heard from Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke, and discussed the ongoing economic recovery.

*Below is Chairman Johnson’s statement as prepared for delivery:*

“Today I welcome Chairman Bernanke back to this Committee to deliver the Federal Reserve’s Semiannual Monetary Report to Congress.

“There are reasons to be optimistic about our nation’s economic recovery. The U.S. economy has expanded for 10 straight quarters, and private sector employment has increased for 23 straight months. Private employers added 2.1 million jobs last year, the most since 2005.

“But there are also reasons to be concerned, such as the European debt crisis and the continuing drag of the housing market on the broader economy. This Committee has paid close attention to these two issues and held numerous hearings. While I remain hopeful that we are moving in the right direction, we must continue to monitor the situation in Europe closely. On housing, there is a variety of policy proposals – some that do not require an act of Congress – that should be considered to improve the housing market. I want to thank Governor Duke for her thoughtful testimony on Tuesday before this Committee on the Federal Reserve’s white paper on options to improve the housing market.

“An additional challenge, the sharp increase in oil prices, has the potential to impede the economic recovery. Americans continue to grapple with higher fuel costs when they fill up their cars or heat their homes. It is important that oil markets are closely monitored for signs of manipulation or supply disruption, and I look forward to hearing the Fed’s views on how rising oil prices may affect consumer spending and economic growth.

“I appreciate all the Fed has done to ensure continued economic recovery. Chairman Bernanke, I look forward to hearing more from you on the Fed’s recent actions and possible future actions to protect our economy.

“Congress also has an important role in making sure the economy continues to grow, and more Americans continue to find the jobs they need. This week, the full Senate continues to consider the Transportation bill. This bill includes the bipartisan effort of this Committee to update our nation’s public transit infrastructure and create jobs. I am also hopeful that the Senate can find consensus on capital formation initiatives, the topic of another hearing next week before this Committee, to promote job creation while protecting investors.

“With so many Americans in search of work, it is not too late for bipartisan action to create jobs and promote sustainable growth. I look forward to your views, Chairman Bernanke, on these and other steps Congress can take to improve our nation’s economy.”

