



*Coalition Seeks Full Funding From Congress*

**2009 White House Budget Derails**

**Progress Amtrak Has Made**

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WASHINGTON, DC — The States for Passenger Rail Coalition ([www.s4prc.org](http://www.s4prc.org)) vigorously opposes President Bush's 2009 budget for Amtrak, which would drastically slash funding by \$455 million — a 34 percent cut.

The 2009 budget calls for \$900 million for Amtrak in the coming year, a sharp drop from the current funding level of \$1.355 billion.

The coalition, made up of 31 states in all parts of the nation, today called on Congress to reverse the cuts and continue the momentum of expanded passenger rail service in America. Coalition members stressed the budget ignores the strong public demand for passenger rail service. In 2007, Amtrak carried 25.8 million passengers — the fifth consecutive year of increased ridership for the nation's passenger railroad.

“The White House budget ignores what the traveling public wants,” Frank Busalacchi, chair of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, said. “The ridership numbers speak for themselves. More and more people are traveling by train every year. The budget proposal also undermines the growing partnerships between states and Amtrak to expand service in heavily traveled corridors.”

Busalacchi also pointed out the proposed budget cuts run counter to the recommendations of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, which recently issued its report “Transportation for Tomorrow”.

The commission's report to Congress, released in January, called for expanded capital investments in passenger rail service through 2050.

That report recommended retaining the entire existing passenger rail system in America, and adding new service in areas where population is expected to grow at a significant rate.

Examples of new service corridors are: Fort Wayne with Chicago; Kansas City with Omaha; Nashville with Atlanta, Knoxville with Chattanooga.

The plan builds upon the existing national passenger rail network by adding more frequent service, includes development of federally designated high-speed rail corridors and makes future service extensions designed to connect population centers. The plan also quantifies the energy, safety, environmental, congestion and mobility benefits of passenger rail service.

“With gasoline prices rising, highway congestion worsening, and record airline delays continuing, it only makes sense to invest more in America’s passenger rail system,” Busalacchi said.