

May 17, 2011

The Honorable Louise M. Slaughter
U.S. House of Representatives
2469 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Slaughter:

On behalf of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, I would like to thank you and the other members of the Bi-Cameral High Speed & Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus for your efforts during the debate over the FY11 continuing resolution. The Caucus' efforts to continue our collective efforts to build and operate a safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible passenger rail system are greatly appreciated. The need for such a system grows proportionate to the steady increase in the retail price of gasoline.

We would like to provide input on two pending matters. First, the need for \$1 billion in funding for the FY12 Transportation and Housing Appropriation for the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail program is crucial. This was demonstrated again recently when 24 states submitted \$10 billion in funding requests for USDOT's call for applications last month of the available \$2.4 billion in high speed rail funds.

1. Enhance the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Program.
2. Make intercity passenger rail eligible for "toll credits".
3. Preserve the Congestion and Air Quality Mitigation Program and make eligibility for capital and operating activities permanent.
4. Preserve key rail/highway crossing programs - 130 and the Swift Act 1103 (c) (2). Continue to invest in Positive Train Control (PTC) programs.
5. Allow PRIIA section 301 funds to be used for one year of initial assistance.
6. Direct the Federal Railroad Administration to adopt the same standards for Categorical Exclusions from NEPA as the Federal Highway Administration.

By preserving current eligibility and allowing intercity passenger rail to compete for "soft match", standardizing environmental documentation, enhancing loan programs, and allowing states to prudently launch new or expanded services, you are proving a strong set of prudent financial tools that states and corridors can employ.

Again, we appreciate your efforts. We look forward to working with you and your wonderful staff.

Sincerely,



Paula J. Hammond, P.E.
Chair, States for Passenger Rail Coalition

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Arizona
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Connecticut
Delaware
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Louisiana
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Missouri
New Hampshire
New York
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