

States for Passenger Rail

2000 Annual Report

1. Mission and membership

States for Passenger Rail is a coalition of state departments of transportation to advocate for federal funding and to support intercity passenger rail initiatives.

- The coalition in 2000 had nineteen members: Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.
- At least twelve other states were considering membership, or participated in meetings and information sharing.
- The Wisconsin Department of Transportation initiated the concept for the coalition at a national summit on high speed rail in October of 1999. In early 2000, the coalition formed, with each state member assigning a delegate to a coalition Steering Committee.

2. Key activities and achievements in 2000

- The coalition participated in a Congressional briefing on February 1, at which state DOT leaders addressed nearly 140 Congressional members, staff, and other interested agencies to introduce the coalition and lay the groundwork for the coming year.
- In March, the coalition sent a letter to Rep. David Obey in support of federal funding for passenger rail. Rep. Obey worked with Rep. Martin Sabo to place the letter in the official record of the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee.
- Coalition member states have been instrumental in providing letters from state and local agencies to Congress urging support for the High Speed Rail Investment Act of 2000 to provide a 10-year, \$10 billion capital program for passenger rail.
- In June, coalition representatives met with staff leaders from the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee to call for support of passenger rail.
- NC DOT Deputy Secretary David King testified for the coalition at a July 25 hearing on transportation finance before the House Ways & Means Oversight subcommittee.
- Coalition representatives met with several Congressional leaders in both houses to discuss support of the High Speed Rail Investment Act during the fall deliberations in 2000.
- Several CEO's from coalition member DOT's participated in Amtrak's inaugural run of the Acela Express in November of 2000.

3. Future activities / legislative agenda

- The High Speed Rail Investment Act, although co-sponsored by 57 Senators and 172 Representatives, failed to pass Congress in 2000. The coalition will advocate strongly for passage of this bill in the 2001 Congressional session.
- In addition, the coalition will seek to maximize passenger rail funding in the FY 2002 annual appropriations, the Amtrak reauthorization (2002), and the TEA 21 reauthorization (2003).

For more information:

Terrence D. Mulcahy, P.E.
Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
PO Box 7910
Madison, WI 53707-7910

Phone: (608) 266-1114