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S4PRC.org

June 28, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eric Cantor
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-329 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

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California
Capital Corridor

Northern
New England
Passenger
Rail Authority

Southern High
Speed Rail
Commission

Dear Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader Cantor:

As Chair of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC), an organization representing 34 member states across the nation, I respectfully urge you to preserve the existing funds appropriated for high-speed rail corridors and intercity passenger rail in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) (P.L. 111-5). SPRC members include state employees responsible for planning, funding and delivering passenger rail projects, for advising Governors on passenger rail policy, and for working with state highway and transit agencies, freight rail, Amtrak, citizens and businesses – all with a stake in the future of passenger rail in this country.

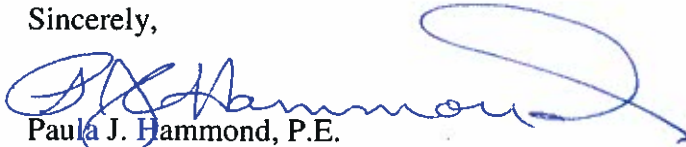
As you know, on June 15th the House Appropriations Committee adopted an amendment to the FY2012 Energy and Water Appropriations Act that would rescind over \$1 billion in unobligated funding from this important program. While we respect and understand the need for additional financial resources to address the consequences of the natural disasters along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, other sources of funding should be used to pay for those devastating emergencies. We urge you to find another offset for that emergency spending before the FY2012 Energy and Water Appropriations Act comes to the floor.

Beginning with the first ARRA rail awards in January 2010 and as recently as last month when additional projects were selected, states and other grant recipients have been working expeditiously to obligate those critical dollars as quickly as possible, well in advance of the statutory deadline of September 30, 2012. A majority of the ARRA funds are already obligated and work has begun to plan, design, construct and procure for new and improved rail service throughout the United States. We continue to engage with the Federal Railroad Administration, the freight railroads, Amtrak and other stakeholders every day to accelerate the remaining projects. States have invested significant staff time and money to compete for these funds and move them to obligation. To rescind these awards now, after so much planning and expense, is counter-productive and wasteful. At this very moment, ARRA rail funds are being used to employ thousands of people across the country in meaningful jobs.

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We respectfully request that you preserve the ARRA rail funds and find another offset for the emergency U.S. Army Corps of Engineers funding before the FY2012 Energy and Water Appropriations Act comes to the floor. Thank you for your attention to our concerns. We look forward to working with you to bring new and improved high-speed and intercity passenger rail service to the nation, while creating hundreds of thousands of American jobs.

Sincerely,



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

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Steny Hoyer