

**Statement from States for Passenger Rail Coalition Chair Paula Hammond on House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Passenger Rail Proposal – the Competition for Intercity Passenger Rail in America Act of 2011**

June 21, 2011

“Chairman Mica and Subcommittee Chairman Shuster have introduced a wide-ranging bill focused on the future of intercity passenger rail. We appreciate the interest of the sponsors in seeking ways to make the nation's passenger rail system more efficient and financially sustainable, proposing new initiatives to pay for the necessary investment and engaging all levels of government and the private sector. The draft legislation provides some answers to the question of how to pay for passenger rail, but it also raises tough questions.

We hope to work with Mr. Mica, Mr. Shuster, Ranking Member Rahall and Ranking Member Brown to achieve a consensus on how to move forward and make the critical investments necessary in the Northeast Corridor, in State-Supported Routes, and in long distance trains. Mr. Mica and Mr. Shuster have raised a fundamental financial concern for all of us: that there is no silver bullet and there are no easy answers.

As an alliance of 33 state leaders from across the U.S., the mission of the SPRC is to promote the development, implementation and expansion of intercity passenger rail services with involvement and support from state governments. As part of that mission we work to facilitate coordination and cooperation among state officials, and between the public and private sector at all levels (federal, state and local) in the effort to promote and develop intercity passenger rail service. To that end, we urge continued state and federal funding to support on-going development of America's passenger rail system.

Private sector involvement could prove to be an important tool to assist in improving and building out a national network of intercity passenger rail service. We appreciate consideration of private investment and options for stimulating private interest. At the same time, Amtrak is operating record ridership levels on the Northeast Corridor, has unique access rights to tracks across the country, and has made significant investments in infrastructure and equipment. We should carefully consider any changes to the current structure and what impacts these changes may have on the future viability of intercity passenger rail.

Again, SPRC looks forward to working with the bipartisan leadership of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure toward meeting the challenges ahead.”

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