



Coalition Chair Briefed On New Funding At Special White House Guidance Session

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Inquiries To: John Boffa
Boffa and Associates
(202) 234-5758
Randy Wade
(608) 516-6382

WASHINGTON, DC – States for Passenger Rail Coalition Chairman Frank Busalacchi attended a special White House strategic guidance session today on the intercity passenger rail section of The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. Busalacchi said. “I thank President Obama, Vice President Biden, and the Congressional leaders, for making this unprecedented sum of money available for passenger rail. Now we must apply the funding to projects that will expand and enhance passenger rail service throughout America. My task today was to understand the process, and share it with all our member states and public authorities.”

Busalacchi said that frequent, reliable and modern intercity passenger rail service is an essential part of a national transportation system. He also stressed that, in the middle of a national recession, these projects will create thousands of new, good-paying jobs throughout the country. It is estimated that for every \$1 billion spent on passenger rail improvement projects, 30,000 new jobs are created.

States will use the funding for a wide range of projects designed to improve service. Among them are track improvements, to increase capacity and reliability; sidings to allow passenger trains to pass slower freight trains; universal crossovers to add capacity on shared-use corridors; grade crossing improvements; advanced signal and train control systems; station improvements, and equipment rehabilitation and acquisition.

Busalacchi also serves as Wisconsin Secretary of Transportation. He pointed out that the ARRA funding would make possible an expanded Midwest high-speed passenger rail network. That network would include 3,000 miles of existing rights of way connecting cities with trains operating at speeds of at least 110 miles per hour. Chicago, which is bidding to host the 2016 Olympic Games, would serve as the hub of the Midwest high-speed network.

“I am excited for the Midwest states, including my home state of Wisconsin,” Busalacchi said. “Most of all, I am pleased to see a significant funding source which is a big step toward reviving intercity passenger rail service throughout the United States.”

Busalacchi noted that the planned Midwest high-speed network provides a national model for the type of service ARRA can fund in other regions.

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition was founded in 2000, and is made up of 31 states in all parts of the country, and two public authorities.

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