

STATES *for* PASSENGER RAIL COALITION

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CHAIR – DEPUTY SECRETARY DAVID KING – NORTH CAROLINA DOT
VICE CHAIR – RAIL MANAGER KEN UZNANSKI – WASHINGTON DOT
SECRETARY /TREASURER – RAIL MANAGER RANDALL WADE – WISCONSIN DOT

2003 Annual Report

1. Mission and Membership

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

In 2003, the Coalition members were Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

Alabama and New Jersey join the coalition during the year.

2. Key Activities and Achievements in 2003: Inform

Goal: Keep all members prompt, timely and accurate information regarding intercity passenger developments and federal funding.

SPRC held three well attended membership meetings during the year: January in Washington, DC in conjunction with the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting; in March in Washington, DC in Conjunction with SCORT meeting and in September in Buffalo, New York again in conjunction with SCORT.

Four coalition wide conference calls were held during the year. The calls help both to bring the membership up to date on developments but also to assign roles to individual states in the efforts to achieve our mutually agreed upon goals.

The Executive Committee in conjunction with additional members held bi-weekly conference calls to carefully manage activities.

SPRC retained David Ewing to represent the group in Washington. David distributed material electronically and by other means to the collective membership and in response to individual requests.

3. Key Activities and Achievements in 2003: Partner

Goal: Strengthen and expand relationships with like-minded organizations and groups through the broad involvement of many members

SPRC sponsored a half page advertisement in Roll Call. Part of the cost of the ad was borne by the High Speed Ground Transportation Association as well as the American Passenger Rail Coalition.

Ken Uznanski (Manager, Rail Office, Washington State DOT) represented SPRC at a major Railway Supply Institute meeting. The meeting afforded Ken to have significant input into the drafting of subsequent legislation. Further, the networking has created a very strong relationship with key congressional staff. SRI has signal a willingness to continue this partnership.

SPRC continued to reach out to organize labor and Class I railroads.

SPRC co-sponsored a major Washington meeting with the High Speed Ground Transportation Association. Many SPRC members were on the program and in the audience. Our Chairman, David King, Deputy Secretary, North Carolina DOT, represents North Carolina on the board of HSGTA. Former SPRC Chairman Terry Mulcahy (former Secretary, Wisconsin DOT) worked hard to strengthen the relationship between SPRC and HSGTA.

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SPRC reached out to regional organization like the Coalition of Northeastern Governors and the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. Through the efforts of Caitlin Hughes (Washington Representative North Carolina DOT, Governor Easley's Washington Office), SPRC was able to extend our coordination to the National Governors Association and Individual State Washington Offices.

A solid relationship was maintained with AASHTO and SCORT through the efforts of an array of New York State DOT representatives, Ken Uznanski and R. Leo Penne, Intermodal and Industries, AASHTO. The solid relationship proved helpful in coordinating congressional correspondence. More specifically:

Joseph H. Boardman (Commissioner, New York State DOT), John Horsley (Executive Director, AASHTO) and Ken Uznanski held the press conference in January 2003 during the Transportation Research Board's Annual Meeting to release AASHTO report Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation. The report "provides an overview of intercity passenger rail service in the United States, summarizing the characteristics of the current system, reviewing the relevant, history and projecting future plans ... It aggregates state estimates of investment needs to the national level to establish the cost of realizing the benefits of efficient and dependable intercity passenger rail service and to support the case for dedicated, sustainable, federal funding."

The comprehensive report has played a significant role in the debate over a dedicated funding source for intercity passenger rail.

SPRC invested \$3,000 to help develop a criteria statement. The statement was released AASHTO as "Criteria for National Intercity Passenger Rail Reform." The criteria referenced the bottom line reports, and made five statements calling for federal responsibility, establishing partnerships, providing a stable and responsible system for funding rail passenger operating costs, creating a dedicated, sustainable source of capital funding.

Through the efforts of Caitlin Hughes the Criteria Statement and the Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation report helped form the basis of a revised National Governors Association Rail Policy. The Policy in turned formed the foundation for a draft letter on the need for a rail title in the reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century.

SPRC held a congressional briefing in conjunction with AASHTO's February Washington Briefing. Attended by more 50 different Congressional Offices. The meeting attracted congressional leaders like House Transportation & Infrastructure's rail Subcommittee Chairman Jack Quinn.

SPRC twice held conference calls with the American Road and Transportation Builders Association to collaborate on Washington activities. SPRC stressed that it did not support the use of High Trust Fund dollars as a dedicated source of funds for intercity passenger rail.

The Executive Committee of the SPRC met in Washington with Allan Rutter, US DOT Deputy Secretary Emil Frankel, Assistant Deputy Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs Sam Reid and a significant number of other senior US DOT officials to discuss the US DOT proposal for intercity passenger rail.

Beyond the US DOT meeting in Washington, the SPRC met twice with Federal Railroad Administrator Rutter to discuss a broad range of intercity passenger rail issues. David Ewing meets periodically with the Administrator to maintain the close work working relationship that exists between Mr. Rutter and SPRC.

At Mr. Rutter's suggestion, the Executive Committee of SPRC and NY DOT Commissioner Boardman (Representing SCORT) met with senior staff at the Office of Management and Budget. The Executive Committee explained their reasoning behind their support for the use of tax credit bonding as the basis for a dedicated source of funding for intercity passenger rail capital investment.

Randy Wade (Passenger Rail Implementation Manager, Wisconsin DOT) and Pat Simmons (Director, Rail Division, North Carolina DOT) nurtured relationship with coalitions of chambers of commerce. The Chicagoland Chamber and the Southeast Economic Alliance have proven valuable allies as a result.

Ellen Tai (North Carolina DOT) upgraded and maintained our website.

4. Key Activities and Achievements in 2003: Advocacy

Goal: Raise our collective voice in support of a strong federal partnership to create a dedicated source of funding for capitol investment in intercity passenger rail equipment, infrastructure, facilities

In addition to the outreach activity list above, SPRC met with David Gunn (Chief Operating Officer of Amtrak) to try to better understand his view of Amtrak-state relations. Meetings and conversations with key congressional staff occurred on an on-going basis.

In April David King testified before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee and the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee's Rail Subcommittee.

On October 2 Claudia Howells (Rail Division Administrator, Oregon DOT), testified before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee and referred to the SPRC. The Missouri Department of Transportation also submitted important outside witness testimony.

Randy Wade organized, planned and participated in a meeting in Washington for Congressional staff, a broad range of financial experts and local SPRC members. The meeting explored the merits of bond financing as a dedicated source of funding for a grant program to support intercity passenger rail capital programs.

David Ewing and George Conner (Assistant Director for Rail, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation) met with commuter agencies and congressional staff on the issue of liability reform.

SPRC Executive Committee, individual members and David Ewing have regular contact with key congressional staff. The significant players include:

- 1) Debbie Hersman, Minority Professional Staff Member, Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Subcommittee, Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
- 2) Robert Freeman, Majority Professional Staff Member, Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Subcommittee, Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
- 3) Mary Philips, Majority Professional Staff Member, Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Subcommittee, Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
- 4) Joe Gusso, Legislative Assistant, Senator Kaye Bailey Hutchison.
- 5) Eben Peck, Senior Legislative Assistant, Senator Olympia Snowe.
- 6) Glenn Scammel, Majority Staff Director, Railroads Subcommittee, House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
- 7) John Brennan, Deputy Counsel, Railroads Subcommittee, House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
- 8) Frank Mulvey, Minority Staff Director, Railroads Subcommittee, House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

David Ewing developed SPRC Congressional Strategy paper(s) for 108th Congress.

David Ewing tracked federal legislation, provided analysis and recommended action. This legislation included:

- 1 . S 1501 Passenger Rail Investment Reform Act
- 2 . HR 3211 Passenger Rail Investment Reform Act
- 3 . S 1961 Arrive 21 Act
- 4 . S 2216 Rail Transportation Security Act
- 5 . S 1505 American Rail Equity Act of 2003
- 6 . S 104 National Defense Rail Act
- 7 . HR 2726 National Defense Rail Act
- 8 . HR 396 Emergency Anti-Recession Act of 2003
- 9 . S 1409 Rebuild America Act of 2003
- 10 . HR 2615 Rebuild America Act of 2003
- 11 . HR 2989 Transportation, Treasury, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2004
12. HJ Res 2 Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003
- 13 . HR 874 Rail Passenger Disaster Family Assistance Act of 2003
- 14 .HR 2571 Rail Infrastructure Development and Expansion Act for the 21st Century
- 15 . HR 1617 National Rail Infrastructure Program Act
- 16 . S 1402 Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act
17. HR 2378 Railroad Safety Reform Act of 2003
- 18 . S 1072 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003
19. HR 2572 Amtrak Reauthorization Act of 2003
20. HR 2712 Emergency Directed Rail Service Act
21. S 1598 To require the Comptroller General to carry out a study to determine the feasibility of undertaking passenger rail transportation security programs that are similar to those of foreign...

22. S 1599 To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct a study of the feasibility of implementing a program for the full screening of passengers, baggage, and cargo on Amtrak trains,...
23. S 1329 To amend title 49, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Transportation to carry out a grant program to provide financial assistance for local rail line relocation projects.
24. HR 948 Community Rail Line Relocation Assistance Act of 2003 (Introduced in House)
25. HR 1815 Rail Line Relocation Act of 2003 (Introduced in House)

5. Conclusions:

1. Growing membership and growing membership involvement and participation.
2. Strong partnering with other groups.
3. Success in trying to educate and inform.

6. The Road Ahead:

2004 is a critical legislative year. The year presents major challenges: mounting federal budget deficit, security threats and the distractions associated with a presidential election.

We will strive to find the appropriate legislative vehicle, perhaps the reauthorization of TEA-21, to find additional federal investment in intercity passenger rail.