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Patricia Quinn, Chair, the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc., (SPRC)

Prepared for the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

US DOT, Federal Railroad Administration

SPRC is comprised of state and agency leaders from across the United States. The Coalition's mission is to promote the research, development, implementation, operation, sustainability, and expansion of publicly-supported intercity passenger rail services. Our membership of 23 state departments of transportation and 2 passenger rail authorities sponsor intercity passenger rail services comprising 48% of America's intercity passenger rail traffic.

On behalf of SPRC, I would like to provide the Committee with our recommendations for the FY 2016 Transportation, Housing and Related Agencies (THUD) appropriation:

1. Provide \$300 million for the Rail Line Relocation & Improvement Capital Grant Program (RLR) under Section 9002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The funds would be administered by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and would be used to help reroute railroads away from densely populated urban areas and to strengthen grade crossing safety, especially as related to the movement of energy trains.
2. Provide \$300 million for the High Speed Intercity PRIIA Sections 301, 302 and 501, more specifically, ten percent of the funds made available should be used for state and multistate planning. Multistate planning and coordination have been a fundamental aspect of our region's business plan for intercity passenger rail from the beginning. Although prioritizing and harmonizing a significant number of high-value projects is challenging, such an approach leads to greater efficiency and a higher return on investment.
3. Provide \$1 million for a State-Supported Route Advisory Committee (PRIIA Section 209). Since the adoption of PRIIA in 2008, the states and intercity passenger rail authorities that comprise the SPRC have invested significant staff time, and financial resources, to work with Amtrak, FRA, the Surface Transportation Board (STB), the Federal Mediation and Arbitration Board, elected officials and stakeholders on the critical implementation of PRIIA Section 209. While much progress has been made on the national advancement of intercity passenger rail through the efforts of the states, the costs to support PRIIA Section 209 has been, up to this point, accomplished through the voluntary efforts of the

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Washington
Wisconsin
Capital Corridor
Joint Powers
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New England
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Rail Authority

Supported Route Advisory Committee will ensure the continued involvement of states to fully implement the requirements of PRIIA Section 209.

4. PRIIA Section 305 has helped to both stimulate the American railcar manufacturing and supply industry and to begin the process of bringing a new generation of equipment on line. We recommend that \$1 million be invested to continue its efforts. Section 305 called for the establishment of the Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC) in 2010. Since its inception, the NGEC has developed and adopted five vehicle specifications for next generation rail equipment; a hardware specification for Digital Train Line communications (DTL); and is currently developing a sixth vehicle specification (Dual Mode -DC 3rd Rail- Locomotive) which is anticipated to be adopted by the NGEC Executive Board in November, 2015. FY 2016 funding will allow for maintaining and updating current specifications and for fostering additional procurements.
5. We support \$600 million for the TIGER (ARRA Title XXII) program, which has funded an array of critical projects. We would urge that again in FY 2016, the emphasis be placed on awards based on a rigorous benefit-cost analysis. Further, we request that 10 percent of the funding be set identified for planning purposes. This is especially needed as the pre-application process places a very heavy emphasis on planning requirements.

In addition to sponsoring intercity passenger rail services, SPRC members work closely with the freight railroads to implement capacity and safety improvements to ensure more efficient and effective freight and intercity passenger rail services. SPRC members partner with the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to manage the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)-sponsored highway-railroad crossing safety program, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)-sponsored State Safety Oversight Program, and the FRA-certified State Rail Safety Programs. SPRC members are also active in local Operation Lifesaver Rail Safety Education Programs.