

Chair, Secretary Frank J. Busalacchi, Wisconsin DOT
Vice Chair, Rail Manager Ken Uznanski, Washington DOT
Secretary-Treasurer, Deputy Commissioner Karen J. Rae, New York DOT



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December 19, 2008

The Honorable David R. Obey
United States House of Representatives
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4907

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
United States House of Representatives
2112 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0541

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis:

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition respectfully requests your consideration of several authorized, rail-related programs in need of FY2009 appropriations. More specifically, we would like to request full funding of four provisions in Division B: Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), in the newly enacted Federal Rail Safety Improvements Act of 2008 (P.L.110-432).

The *Section 301 State Corridor Capital Assistance Grant Program* provides much needed funding for infrastructure, equipment, insurance and planning. (FY 2009 - \$100 million)

The *Section 501 High Speed Rail Corridor Grant Program* directs the Secretary to establish a high-speed rail corridor program. It authorizes the Secretary to make competitive grants to a state, a group of states, an Interstate Compact, a public agency established by states, or Amtrak to finance capital projects in high-speed rail corridors. (FY 2009 - \$150 million)

The *Section 305 Next Generation Corridor Train Equipment Pool* provisions direct Amtrak to establish a Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee to design, develop specifications, and procure standardized next-generation corridor equipment. The provision will accelerate the acquisition of modern train sets desperately needed to provide safe and frequent service to meet growing demand. It is important for this work to begin immediately. We are, therefore, requesting that the \$5 million authorized for this work in FY 2010 be appropriated instead in FY 2009. (FY 2009 - \$5 million)

Additionally, in light of state budget conditions, we request that report language be included giving the Federal Railroad Administration authority to provide funding for state department officials to participate in the work of the committee.

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The deliberations of the *Section 212 Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission*, as created by PRIIA, will be critical for maximizing the economic growth and environmental utility of the NEC. The Commission will promote mutual cooperation and planning by the NEC States, Amtrak and U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) for intercity, commuter and freight use of the Corridor. (FY 2009 - \$2 million)

We are also requesting full funding for the following grant program included in Division A: Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, in the newly enacted Federal Rail Safety Improvements Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-432):

The *Section 105 Railroad Safety –Technology Grant Program* provides grants to passenger and freight railroad carriers, railroad suppliers, and state and local governments for interoperable train control technologies, such as positive train control (PTC), required for high-risk corridors where commuter or passenger trains operate. (FY 2009 - \$50 million)

Finally, we suggest that adequate resources be provided to allow the Federal Railroad Administration to effectively carry out its expanded responsibilities for these new intercity passenger rail grant programs and related studies.

We thank the Subcommittee for this opportunity to share our views. We stand ready to provide you with any additional information on the importance of intercity passenger rail program funding.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Busalacchi
Chair, States for Passenger Rail Coalition
Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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