March 27, 2008

The Honorable John W. Olver
Chairman, Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Olver:

On behalf of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, I am pleased to share with
the Subcommittee the perspective of our 31 member states on transportation
funding in the FY2009 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Among the many benefits of a robust national intercity passenger rail system to
our country, we believe that the economic and energy-saving benefits alone justify
a substantial federal investment in this mode.

We urge you to include the following provisions in the Subcommittee’s bill:

- Amtrak funding of $1.671 billion at a minimum;
- $100 million for the state capital investment program for intercity passenger
  rail. This program is leading the way to a new approach to intercity
  passenger rail service and we appreciate your support for this program last
  year. We recommend that ten percent of total funding be directed to
  corridor development planning and an additional five percent be directed to
  related education and outreach efforts.
- Funding for the Swift High Speed Rail Development and Rail Line
  Relocation and Improvement programs;
- $10 million to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Research and
  Innovative Technology Administration’s Nationwide Differential Global
  Positioning System effort (NDGPS). NDGPS is essential to the
  development of advanced train control systems providing safety and
  capacity benefits to both passenger and freight operations.
Importantly, the vast majority of these vital investments will stay close to home where citizens can see the energy and environmental benefits of rail service. As always, we appreciate your continued leadership and support for intercity passenger rail development in the United States.

Sincerely,

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