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States for



Passenger Rail Coalition

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February 15, 2008

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
U.S. House of Representative
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Blumenauer:

As you develop your legislative strategy for the second session of the 110th Congress, I urge you to consider both legislation and resolutions that link transportation, energy, climate change and economic development. As Chair of the States for Passenger Coalition and a member of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, I believe that one of the clearest examples of this linkage is the intercity passenger rail corridor. Over a dozen such corridors, 200 to 500 miles in length, are emerging around the Nation.

Spawned in part by rising congestion and motor fuel prices as well as a growing environmental consciousness, more people are riding the train. This makes good environmental and energy sense. Intercity passenger rail stations are key locations in urban locations. They serve as multimodal homes to all forms of transit as well as critical non-motorized transportation such as walking and bicycling. They provide retail and cultural centers. Rail stations serve as farmers markets, providing healthy alternatives in urban food deserts. Numerous mixed use housing and other energy efficient land use developments are fostered by intercity passenger rail stations.

The key to expansion of these corridors is capital for investment in infrastructure and equipment. A dedicated, 80-20 federal-state matching program as well as 30 year, tax credit bonds would enable states and groups of states to capture these benefits. Such a financing package would make intercity passenger rail the funding equivalent of other surface transportation programs. Whether in a second economic stimulus, comprehensive transportation funding legislation or some other tax legislation, I urge you to include stable, long-term funding for intercity passenger rail. I would note that every \$ 1 billion dollars invested in rail creates 20,000 green jobs.

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition appreciates your longstanding support for these issues. We look forward to working with you to support access for all of our citizens in a safe, energy conscious, environmentally sound manner.

Sincerely,

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

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