



Congress Urged to Commit Funds for Rail in Stimulus II

**Passenger Rail Coalition Lists \$1.4 Billion
In Projects Ready for Stimulus II Funding**

November 17, 2008

Inquiries To: John Boffa
Boffa and Associates
(202) 234-5758

Randy Wade
(608) 516-6382

WASHINGTON, DC—The States for Passenger Rail Coalition is calling on Congress to commit part of its Stimulus II economic package for passenger rail and has identified \$1.4 billion in “ready-to-go” projects nationwide in which funding could be put to immediate use.

Congress will return to Washington this week to deliberate the Stimulus II economic package.

The 31-member state coalition reminds Congress that money invested in intercity passenger rail projects can create thousands of good-paying jobs throughout the economy and help lift the country out of its current economic slump. The coalition and its member states have identified dozens of infrastructure upgrade projects in 16 states throughout the country that are ready to be funded.

The coalition strongly urges Congress to include funding for state intercity passenger rail projects for the following key reasons:

- The job-creation power of intercity passenger rail is very strong. For every \$1 billion invested in passenger rail projects, 30,000 new, good-paying jobs are created.
- Intercity passenger rail investment leads to rail-oriented development around stations and increases the demand for retail services in stations and the surrounding area.
- The needs are pressing. Equipment for state-supported services is in short supply. Seventeen percent of Amtrak's locomotives and 15 percent of its passenger fleet are out of service. Investment in track and signal infrastructure is needed now to deal with existing rail congestion and to add new passenger rail service.
- Substantial rail investment has the potential to revitalize the nation's industrial base as plants gear up to produce rail supplies and equipment.

“The rail projects are needed and are ready to go,” coalition chair Frank Busalacchi said. “We understand Congress will be considering ways to inject money quickly into the economy. We want Congress to remember that the U.S. passenger rail system has been underfunded for years. Investing in intercity passenger rail helps meet the growing passenger demand, while creating thousands of new, good-paying jobs. With unemployment at a 14-year record high, good-paying jobs are needed now.”

Busalacchi is the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

For a list of “ready to go” passenger rail projects broken down by state, go to www.s4prc.org.

##

