



June 15, 2011

The Honorable «FirstName» «LastName»
U.S. Representative/Senator from «State»
«Building», «Suite»
Washington, DC 20015

Hand-Delivered

Dear Senator/Representative «LastName»,

We ask that the current Congress include appropriations in FY 2012 for the HSIPR program, and also make passenger rail development a strong, vital component in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization, with a dedicated source of funding similar to other modes of transportation.

Our states have been working together for over a dozen years on complementary multi-state plans for significantly improving passenger rail service. We believe that a strong, efficient network of 15 corridors, with multiple daily frequencies, and new trainsets running at speeds up to 110 mph can be brought to the Midwest. The build-out will bring over \$30 billion in economic benefit to the region, while creating an average of more than 20,000 jobs annually during construction and approximately 75,000 permanent new jobs. In addition, CREATE (Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program) is a project of national economic significance that will reduce congestion on Amtrak routes serving the entire Midwest.

Continuous and reliable capital investments are key to the success of passenger rail. In support of the region’s plan for a system of fast, frequent passenger trains, Midwestern states have submitted applications totaling over \$12.5 billion for funding available under the federal High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail program, and have been awarded \$2.5 billion.

With appropriate resources, passenger rail can become a viable intercity – and interstate – transportation alternative for most of the residents in the Midwest and other regions.

Passenger rail has the potential to meet many of our nation’s energy and environmental goals, as well as provide solutions to our increasingly congested transportation system. This transportation option is increasingly popular in the Midwest. Ridership on our region’s shorter, corridor routes during the first half of FY 2011 was up 12 percent over the same period in FY 2010. Between FY 2005 and FY 2010, ridership on these routes jumped **55 percent**.

The Midwestern region has and will benefit strongly from the federal government’s commitment to partnering with the states to provide capital improvements to corridors in our region. Our states, and states across the country that are planning for faster, more frequent passenger rail service will continue to need the federal government’s partnership. We need to shift to looking at transportation development as a system. Passenger rail is generally the best option for transporting people who are traveling between 100 and 600 miles. It is also often a better transportation mode than others in certain types of weather and under emergency situations. When that transportation “leg” is weak, it leads to the congestion, lost travel time, and decreased fuel-efficiency.

We also recommend that transportation programs continue to be delivered through a partnership with the states, local government, and the private sector, but that the current programs be consolidated into a performance-based approach to decision-making and funding of projects.

Our region is ready with the plans to build an efficient, cost-effective, vibrant system with the potential to reap tremendous economic returns and job creation for the region, while connecting 150 communities across the Midwest. The estimated return for this plan is 1.8, meaning that every dollar spent is expected to yield a return of 1.8 dollars.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission

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*Bringing Together
State Leaders from
Across the Region
to Advocate
for Passenger Rail
Improvements*

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission is an 11-state interstate compact commission that promotes, coordinates and supports regional improvements to passenger rail service. Our member states include Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and Wisconsin.