

Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission

Sen. Joan Bray, Missouri
Chair

Sen. Sheila Kiscaden, Minnesota
Vice Chair

Sen. DiAnna Schimek, Nebraska
Financial Officer

June 23, 2004

Dear Midwestern Member of Congress,

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) – a compact commission of Midwestern state legislators, governors and their appointees – believes that there is a critical need for the development of faster, more frequent passenger rail service in our region. The Commission strongly supports the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) plan for a 3,000 mile enhanced passenger rail system hubbed in Chicago. Such a system would ease congestion, provide jobs and give Midwesterners the variety of transportation options they need and deserve.

Most of the federal money for improved passenger rail service to date has gone to the Eastern region. While we support that investment as a necessary first step, it is time for the Midwest – which is the rail hub of the nation and holds half of the remaining passenger rail miles in the nation – to take the lead. We need Members of Congress such as you to make investment in passenger rail improvements a priority. We ask for your leadership and your support.

First and most importantly, the Commission supports the enactment of a dedicated federal funding program for infrastructure and equipment improvements necessary to implement regional rail systems like the MWRRI nationwide. Tax credit bonding legislation already introduced in the House and Senate can serve as models for such a federal program.

Specifically, the MIPRC asks you to support:

- **A dedicated tax-credit bonding program for intercity passenger rail development.**
- Within FY 2005 appropriations, **\$1.8 billion for Amtrak, and sufficient funding for other rail programs**, including Next Generation High Speed Rail funding.
- **Rail-focused provisions in TEA-21 reauthorization**, including sufficient funding for Projects of Regional and National Significance; and increased support for highway-rail grade crossing safety; SWIFT Act, RRIF and other infrastructure programs.
- **Rail tax credit provisions within the FSC/ETI “JOBS” bill.**

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

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