

October 1, 2003

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
2407 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you undertake action to complete the FY 2004 Transportation and Treasury Appropriations Bill, the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) would like to express our strong support for the full funding of the nation's transportation programs. While the Governors recognize the tight financial and budgetary constraints that the Congress is facing, we urge you to provide at least \$1.346 billion for Amtrak, a \$33.8 billion obligation limit for the Federal-Aid Highways Program, and \$7.31 billion for the Federal Transit Program.

Specifically, the Governors urge the Congress to fund Amtrak at least at the Senate Appropriations Committee level of \$1.346 billion in FY 2004. This level of federal funding is essential to the short-term stability that Amtrak needs in order to provide safe and reliable intercity and commuter passenger rail service while the policy debate over the future of intercity passenger rail unfolds. States across the nation already provide substantial financial support for the current intercity passenger rail system. The Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states have invested more than \$4 billion in infrastructure and operations since 1992. Even with this substantial state support – and even with reform of the current intercity passenger rail system – the federal government must be a strong, consistent funding partner for intercity passenger rail, just as it is for the other modes of transportation that promote the efficient movement of people and goods.

The Governors also urge the Congress to provide a \$33.8 billion obligation limit for the Federal-Aid Highways Program, and to fund the Federal Transit Program at the Senate Appropriations Committee level of \$7.31 billion. Funding at these levels would continue the progress made over the last several years to improve the condition and safety of the nation's highways, bridges and transit systems. In both urban and rural areas, these infrastructure improvements are not only necessary for moving people, but are also critical for improving the projected substantial growth of freight movements along the nation's surface transportation system.

Within the Federal-Aid Highways and Transit programs, the Governors strongly urge the Congress to direct the Secretary of Transportation to ensure that any apportionments made under an appropriations bill, and the temporary extension of the existing TEA-21 legislation, be made available in a timely manner to States and/or public transportation systems.

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The CONEG Governors thank you for your past support of these important programs, and again urge you to provide at least \$1.346 billion for Amtrak, a \$33.8 billion obligation limit for the Federal-Aid Highways Program, and \$7.31 billion for the Federal Transit Program.

Sincerely,

/o.s./
Mitt Romney
Chair
Governor of Massachusetts

/o.s./
John Baldacci
Vice Chair
Governor of Maine

/o.s./
George E. Pataki
Lead Governor for Transportation
Governor of New York

Identical letters were sent to House & Senate leadership, chairmen & ranking members of House & Senate full Appropriations Committees and Transportation Subcommittees.