

September 15, 2004

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
S-128 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you move to conference on the FY 2005 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations bill, the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) would like to thank you for your continuing efforts to strengthen the nation's security. We recognize that difficult choices must be made when resources are limited. When actions are taken to strengthen the security of the nation's critical infrastructure, we believe high priority must be given to the safety and security of the multi-modal transportation systems that undergird the national economy.

We are pleased that the bill specifically provides funding that will enable the Department of Homeland Security to help strengthen the security of the nation's passenger rail systems. These extensive systems – intercity rail, commuter rail and rail transit – are critical components of the transportation network that provides mobility and supports economic development throughout the Northeast and across the nation. These systems must remain accessible and reliable to be effective. However, major steps can be taken to enhance the protection of these systems through the development and implementation of improved prevention, detection and response technologies and systems.

State and local governments, public transportation authorities, and the nation's railroads have taken significant steps to address the security needs of the nation's passenger rail systems, but they alone cannot shoulder this national priority. The Department of Homeland Security, by providing critical financial resources to and working collaboratively with state and local governments and passenger rail providers, is an essential partner in this joint undertaking.

We welcome your interest in and support for rail security funding, and look forward to timely action by the Congress to provide this funding for rail security through the FY2005 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

Regards,

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

/o.s./
Donald L. Carcieri
Vice-Chair
Governor of Rhode Island

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

Identical letters were also sent to House & Senate Appropriations Committee Leadership and Northeast Conferees