

December 14, 2007

The Honorable John Olver
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6027

The Honorable Joe Knollenberg
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6157

Dear Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Knollenberg:

As you move to complete the omnibus appropriations bill for FY2008, the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) urges you to retain increased funding for Amtrak and intercity passenger rail as provided in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies appropriations conference report, particularly the \$1.375 billion for Amtrak and the \$75 million to the Federal Railroad Administration for capital grants to states. We recognize the extremely difficult fiscal challenges that the Subcommittee faces at this time, and appreciate your longstanding support for the nation's intercity passenger rail system. The modest increased funding levels included in the conference report provide vital resources to make investments essential for an efficient, reliable national intercity passenger rail system.

Increased funding for Amtrak and intercity passenger rail is a major investment in the nation's mobility and economic development. Additional federal investments, which also attract additional state investments, are essential to ensuring reliable and efficient intercity passenger rail service. Increased investment is vital to retain – and attract new – travelers who have contributed to recent record levels of intercity ridership and revenues. At a time of congested highways and airports, continued investment in intercity passenger rail is a smart decision for transportation mobility.

The Governors thank you for your past support of Amtrak and intercity passenger rail, and urge you to support increased funding in the FY2008 omnibus appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

/o.s./
Jon S. Corzine
Chair
Governor of New Jersey

/o.s./
Jim Douglas
Vice-Chair
Governor of Vermont

/o.s./
M. Jodi Rell
Lead Governor for
Transportation
Governor of Connecticut

cc: Representative David Obey
Representative Jerry Lewis

Identical letters were provided to the Senate THUD Subcommittee and copies to the full Appropriations Leadership.