

July 9, 2009

The Honorable John W. Olver
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
2358A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6157

The Honorable Tom Latham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6157

Dear Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Latham:

As the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies prepares to consider the FY2010 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) would like to thank you for your continued support of funding for the nation's critical transportation and community development programs. The Governors recognize the fiscal challenges facing the Subcommittee this year, and the uncertainty surrounding the impending Highway Trust Fund shortfall and the developing framework for the surface transportation authorization. In spite of these challenges, we urge the Subcommittee to continue the strong federal partnership so vital for a national, integrated, multi-modal transportation system.

The CONEG Governors would like to reiterate the key surface transportation and community development programs for the Northeast states in the FY2010 funding bill.

Highway and Transit

The CONEG Governors urge the Subcommittee to fund the combined highway, public transit, and safety programs at levels greater than the current FY2009 levels authorized in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Continued and increased federal investment in these infrastructure improvements is necessary to sustain the progress made under SAFETEA-LU and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to improve the condition and safety of the nation's highways, bridges, and transit systems and to create and sustain jobs and rebuild the economy.

Specifically, the CONEG Governors urge the Subcommittee to:

- Increase the federal aid highway obligation over the FY2009 authorized level;
- Increase public transit funding over the FY2009 authorized level, including full funding for Formula and Bus Grants, the Capital Investment Grants, and the Small Starts Programs; and
- Ensure that these funds are provided to the states in a timely manner.

Rail

The FY2010 appropriations bill will mark the first full appropriations cycle since the enactment of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) and ARRA. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Amtrak continue to implement these new intercity passenger rail initiatives, and the states are working closely with them in this effort.

The ability of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Amtrak, and the states to realize opportunities for service expansion and ridership growth in corridors across the country will depend upon a substantial and on-going federal capital investment in infrastructure, equipment, and safety. A vibrant federal-state partnership will bring expanded, enhanced intercity passenger rail service to corridors across the nation. As part of this partnership, the FRA will need adequate resources including additional staffing to carry out its expanded responsibilities for intercity passenger rail grant programs and related studies.

Specifically, the Governors urge the Subcommittee to:

- Increase funding for the continued development of state-directed intercity passenger rail corridors and service, consistent with the President's request of \$1 billion per year for five years. We remain concerned that the Northeast Corridor states are ineligible to receive high speed rail funds under PRIIA and ARRA. We urge that capital grant program funds be available to states, including NEC states, to advance plans for reliable, frequent and travel-time competitive service and corridors, regardless of maximum speed requirements.
- Provide \$3 million in appropriations specifically for the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission to enable the Commission to access the resources, data and expert analysis that extend far beyond the infrastructure focus of the NEC master plan being developed by Amtrak.
- Provide the authorized level of \$1.84 billion in FY2010 federal funding for Amtrak, including \$975 million for capital improvements.
- Provide funding for national rail programs to develop the technology and equipment that will be critical to providing safe and reliable high speed service, including the Next Generation Corridor Train Equipment Pool, the Nationwide Differential Global Positioning System, the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program, the Rail Line Relocation and Improvement Program, and the Advanced Technology Locomotive Grant Pilot Program.
- Provide a modest increase in funding for the Surface Transportation Board to allow the Board to carry out its expanded responsibilities and oversight under PRIIA for intercity passenger rail corridor service.

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Community Development

The CONEG Governors urge the Subcommittee to provide at least \$4.1 billion for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The CDBG program enables states to provide funding for infrastructure improvements, housing programs, and projects that attract businesses to urban, suburban, exurban, and rural areas, thus creating new jobs and spurring economic development, growth and recovery in the nation's low income and rural communities.

We appreciate the opportunity to share these priorities with the Subcommittee and your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

/o.s./
David A. Paterson
Chair
Governor of New York

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

Identical letters were also provided to Leadership of the Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies