

August 31, 2009

The Honorable Raymond LaHood  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

The Northeast Governors have worked together since 1986 to develop and improve intercity passenger rail service in the Northeast. As our states submit applications to the Federal Railroad Administration for funding under the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program, we renew our commitment to collaborate and coordinate the planning, development and implementation of state and regional initiatives to improve high speed and conventional intercity passenger rail service on the network of corridors that links the 11 Northeast states and the District of Columbia (D.C.).

A sustained commitment of significant capital investment and coordinated planning is needed to achieve the reduced travel times, more frequent service, and better on-time performance that will retain existing travelers and attract significantly more travelers to intercity rail. That is why we consistently support a visionary federal intercity passenger rail policy and increased federal funding; invest our own state resources; and participate in regional partnerships for service and infrastructure planning and projects that improve the rail corridors that serve the Northeast mega region as well as its smaller cities and rural communities.

In 2008, the Northeast Governors endorsed a Governors' Vision for Rail in the Northeast to improve and expand a Northeast Rail Network. This Network supports high speed and conventional intercity, commuter, long distance and regional freight rail services. It serves over 14 million intercity riders annually; provides congestion relief to the highways and airports serving some of the nation's largest cities; offers intermodal connections that strengthen the entire transportation network; and connects our region's smaller cities and communities to the larger national rail network. The rail network is a regional and national transportation asset.

As Governors, we support this Northeast Rail Network which is centered on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) as the regional spine for the larger network of connecting corridors that provides rail access to mid-size cities and smaller communities throughout the 11 states. The Network links our states and communities west and south to the larger national system, and north and west to Canada. The key components of this Network include the following.

- Northeast Corridor, the nation's premier high speed rail service linking major population, governmental and economic centers from Boston to Washington, D.C.;

- Downeaster linking Boston to Portland, Maine and its proposed extension to Brunswick, Maine;
- Boston-Montreal Corridor, a proposed new service linking Boston to Concord, New Hampshire and future service to Montreal, Canada;
- Vermont's Western Corridor connecting Burlington, Rutland and Bennington with Albany and New York City via the Empire Corridor;
- Knowledge Corridor linking Connecticut River Valley communities between Springfield, Massachusetts and White River Junction, Vermont with the Boston-New Haven and the Boston-Montreal segments of the Northern New England High Speed Rail Corridor with connection to the Empire Corridor;
- Springfield to New Haven corridor which links the Knowledge Corridor and interior Connecticut communities to the cities along the entire Northeast Corridor;
- Empire and Adirondack Corridors which span New York State and link New York City, Albany, and Buffalo-Niagara Falls with service to New England, Montreal, Toronto, and points west; and
- Keystone Corridor linking Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia to the NEC.

The Northeast Governors' Vision – similar to the President's Vision for High Speed Rail – sets a goal of improved and expanded passenger rail service with significantly increased ridership throughout the Northeast Rail Network. Our shared Vision seeks to integrate passenger rail into the broader, multi-modal transportation system to make rail an even more significant contributor to improved mobility, economic competitiveness, community revitalization, environmental quality and energy security.

To achieve this Vision, we have set a specific goal of doubling passenger rail ridership in the Northeast by 2030 through the following strategic actions:

- Provide quality service that is safe, reliable, frequent, higher-speed, and time- and price-competitive with other modes;
- Expand service in existing and new markets; and
- Improve system reliability and capacity for growth in service through coordinated planning and investments that will achieve a system-wide State of Good Repair on the NEC and connecting corridors, and move the Northeast toward an interconnected rail system that more efficiently integrates the NEC and connecting corridors.

In developing the applications for HSIPR funds, the Northeast states draw upon a long tradition of working together and with Amtrak to develop and improve the region's passenger rail service and system.

- All 11 Northeast states and the District of Columbia are participating with Amtrak in a collaborative effort to develop a Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Master Plan. This

joint planning process is identifying current and future service plans and infrastructure needs that encompass all users of the Northeast Rail Network.

- We are naming our designees to the pending Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission authorized by the Passenger Rail Infrastructure and Improvement Act of 2008 to promote mutual cooperation and planning for rail activities of the Northeast Corridor region.
- At our direction, the departments of transportation of the 11 states and the District of Columbia have worked together – facilitated by the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) – to coordinate the multi-state work associated with the development of HSIPR applications; assess those projects, programs and plans with particular importance to the entire Network; and provide guidance to ensure that the states’ applications are coordinated across the corridor segments and are consistent with the Governors’ Rail Network Vision.

The projects being submitted by the Northeast states build upon and accelerate the investments and partnerships already underway in the region and advance the Administration’s strategic rail vision. We support these initiatives as being consistent with our shared regional vision for an integrated network of intercity passenger rail corridors.

- All states on the NEC spine – from Massachusetts to Maryland and Washington, D.C. – have drawn upon the draft Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Master Plan to identify specific track, bridge, tunnel and station projects that improve reliability and expand capacity for existing NEC service as well as new intercity service connecting to the NEC. Among these are several regionally significant projects critical to the safety and performance of the entire NEC and the connectors. These include the Walk and Saga bridges in Connecticut, the North Portal Bridge in New Jersey, the Moynihan Station in New York City, the Northern Maryland bridges, the BWI Airport Rail Station in Maryland, and the Baltimore & Potomac tunnel in Maryland. In addition, Rhode Island and Delaware are planning third track improvements to reduce bottlenecks among passenger trains.
- Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont have collaborated to submit several discrete projects and corridor plans that will significantly improve intercity service and trip times on the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield segment and the Inland segment of the Northern New England Corridor; restore and improve service to communities on the Knowledge Corridor in western Massachusetts; and improve on-time performance and reduce trip time on the entire Vermont segment.
- Vermont will advance corridor plans to improve service on the Western Corridor, extending current service from Rutland to Burlington; and jointly planning with New York State for new intercity service connecting Albany-Bennington-Rutland-Saratoga Springs-Albany.

- Maine has completed detailed plans to expand the Downeaster service north from Portland to Brunswick, and has coordinated with Massachusetts and New Hampshire to expand service and improve trip times on the Boston-Portland corridor.
- New Hampshire will develop corridor plans to provide passenger service from Boston to Concord as part of the Boston-Montreal High Speed Rail Corridor.
- New York is advancing a series of regionally significant projects to improve reliability and eliminate bottlenecks at the Albany-Schenectady rail nexus that connects the west, south and north segments of the Empire Corridor, as well as service east to New England. New York is also advancing plans for improved high speed rail corridor service in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls-Albany-New York City segments of the Empire Corridor as well as investments to improve reliability of service on the Adirondack Corridor serving Northern New York, Vermont and Montreal.
- Pennsylvania will make reliability and capacity improvements on the Keystone Corridor East; examine options for enhanced service on Keystone Corridor West; and advance planning for new service in Pittsburgh and linking eastern Pennsylvania to the New York City metro region.
- The states will work jointly to advance critical corridor planning by seeking HSIPR planning funds for a region-wide Alternative Growth Analysis and Network Configuration Plan for the entire Northeast Rail Network; and will accelerate the service development planning and necessary environmental analyses for the Northeast Corridor Spine.

The Northeast Governors, through CONEG, will ensure that this corridor and network-wide collaboration and coordination continue as our states move forward with the HSIPR program. We are creating a regional Northeast Rail Network Task Force composed of a high-level individual from each state. Each state will be responsible for HSIPR-related work done within its respective state and related coordination with the affected host railroads and operators. States may also develop joint agreements for individual projects and corridor segments. However, the Network Task Force will be the multi-state forum to ensure the necessary coordination of subsequent applications for HSIPR funding; and encourage and facilitate maximum coordination and communication to ensure timely progress of corridor initiatives. The Network Task Force will be charged with regularly reporting to the Northeast Governors on the status of HSIPR initiatives and any issues associated with multi-state coordination of applications and their implementation.

We are ready to work together and with the Department of Transportation to advance the President's vision of high speed passenger rail as an integral part of the nation's transportation system that provides the connectivity essential for economic competitiveness, livable

communities, and energy and environmental sustainability. Together with CONEG staff, our state transportation officials look forward to working with the Department to implement the HSIPR Program and building a constructive relationship to realize this vision in the Northeast.

Sincerely,

/o.s./

David A. Paterson  
Governor of New York

/o.s./

Donald L. Carcieri  
Governor of Rhode Island

/o.s./

Jon S. Corzine  
Governor of New Jersey

/o.s./

M. Jodi Rell  
Governor of Connecticut

/o.s./

Jack A. Markell  
Governor of Delaware

/o.s./

John Baldacci  
Governor of Maine

/o.s./

Martin O'Malley  
Governor of Maryland

/o.s./

Deval L. Patrick  
Governor of Massachusetts

/o.s./

John Lynch  
Governor of New Hampshire

/o.s./

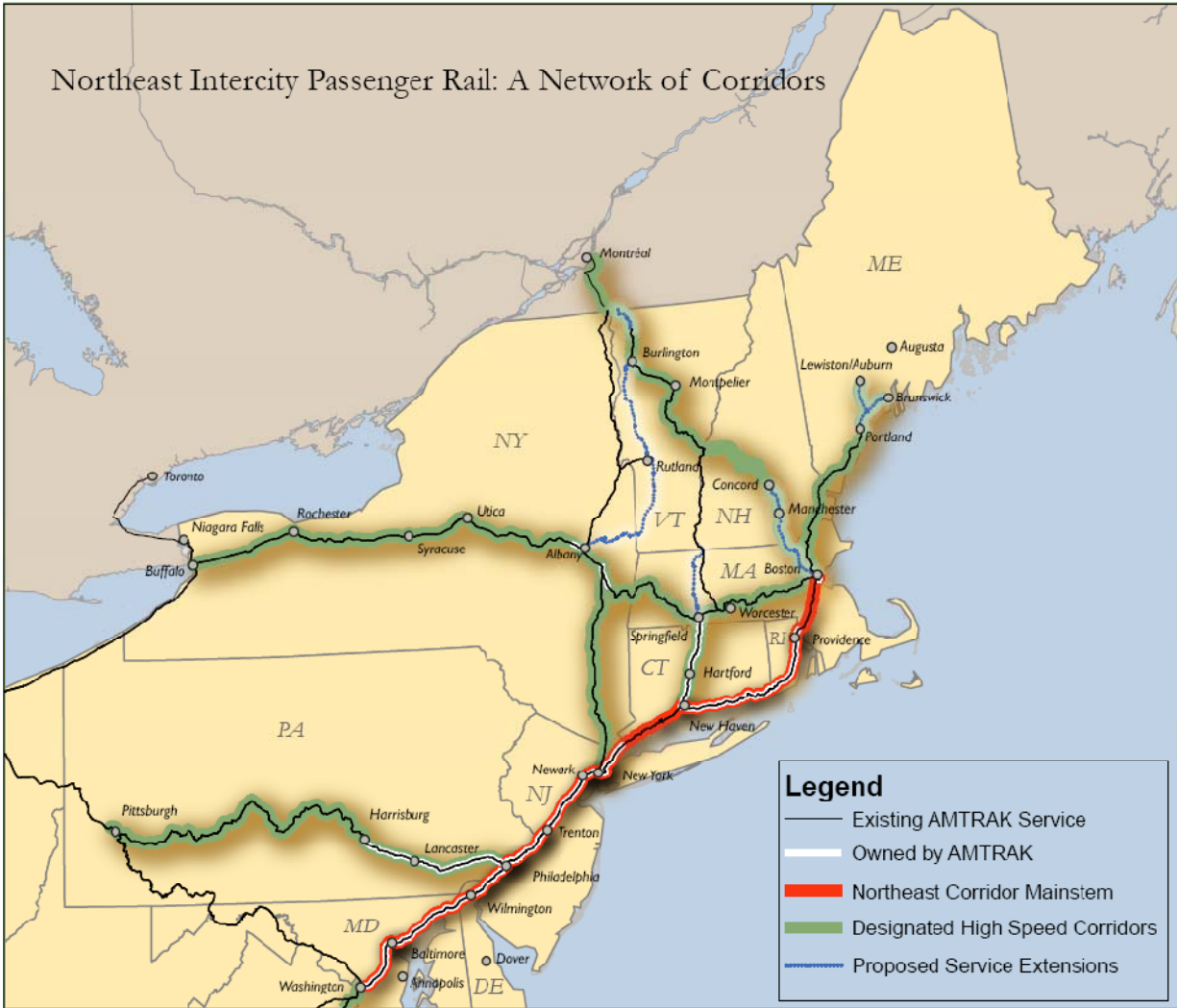
Edward Rendell  
Governor of Pennsylvania

/o.s./

James H. Douglas  
Governor of Vermont

Enclosure: Map - Northeast Intercity Passenger Rail

# Northeast Intercity Passenger Rail: A Network of Corridors



Prepared for the CONEG Policy Research Center  
July, 2009

Prepared by Smart Mobility, Inc.  
Norwich, Vermont  
info@smartmobility.com

