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# Association for Public Transportation

## *Massachusetts Association of Railroad Passengers*

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December 12, 2010

Honorable Deval L. Patrick  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts State House, Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick:

It was good to hear that Massachusetts has been awarded \$32.5 million in High Speed Rail (HSR) funds to expand South Station. No doubt, Secretary Mullan and his team at MassDOT will be able to put these monies to good use. But the Association for Public Transportation (APT-MARP) would like to propose an important use for \$3 million of those funds – **update and complete the DEIR/DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Report/Draft Environmental Report Statement) for the North/South Rail Link (NSRL) in Boston.**

The Association for Public Transportation regularly visits the Massachusetts Congressional delegation in Washington to advocate for an NSRL earmark. Congressman Lynch has submitted the earmark for the past several years, along with Senator Kennedy until his passing. As you well understand, the competition for federal funding is fierce and the project has yet to receive the requested earmark. With the possible ban on earmarks for the incoming Congress, prospects for the upcoming year are not looking good.

In past years, the earmark request has been for \$6 million. This was a worst case scenario which assumed that an engineering firm would require a steep learning curve to analyze the work done earlier. Those assumptions have been revisited. It is now believed that if the original company, VHB (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin), is selected to update the DEIS, the cost would be in the \$3 million range.

APT-MARP's understanding is that the Commonwealth's DEIS for the NSRL is still open. The added South Station train platforms will be situated on the right of way (ROW) for the proposed underground NSRL station. Is it not true that the Commonwealth must complete the federal DEIR and state DEIS for the NSRL prior to submitting the plans for the South Station expansion?

Massachusetts and the entire New England region are at a distinct disadvantage vis a' vis competitor states and regions because the rail networks are disconnected due to that one mile gap between North and South Stations in Boston. The Knowledge Corridor in western Mass is a fine project, but its economic potential pales in comparison to that of an extended Northeast Corridor (NEC) to New Hampshire and points north.

South Station High Speed Rail Grant  
December 8, 2010

The timing for this project is critical. Due to the incompleteness of the DEIS/DEIR for the NSRL, Massachusetts could not take full advantage of the first High Speed Rail grants awarded two years ago. The Commonwealth was forced to watch on the sidelines as significant federal investment went elsewhere.

Currently, Congresswoman Louise Slaughter's (D-NY) office has indicated that President Obama is only requesting \$1 billion this year in HSR funds for the entire country. That is a major reduction from \$2.5 billion last year, and nearly \$10 billion the year before. But the incoming House Committee Chair for Transportation & Infrastructure is Congressman John Mica (R-FL). He is an advocate for high speed rail, and most importantly, the Northeast Corridor. Rather than spread scarce funds around the country, he would like to focus one undertaking and make it a demonstration project for 200 mph high speed rail in the United States. That demonstration project would be a new and improved Northeast Corridor (NEC). There is a good likelihood that the NEC will be extended southward toward Richmond, Virginia and perhaps Charlotte, North Carolina. New England should also insist that the NEC be extended northward toward New Hampshire and Canada, but that would require the NSRL.

This would be a significant project for the Commonwealth. Transit times of 85 minutes between Boston and New York, in addition to a well-connected state and region would redefine the Commonwealth's economic engine. It would be extremely unfortunate if we were to let this opportunity pass us by.

APT-MARP would like to work with you to make this vision a reality. We would appreciate any feedback you could offer us on this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Arena  
President  
APT-MARP



Michael C. Cooper  
Co-President  
APT-MARP

C: Jeffery B. Mullan, Secretary & CEO, MassDOT  
Richard A. Davey, General Manager, MBTA