

February 10, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Cochran:

On behalf of a diverse coalition of regional and national organizations and businesses, we are writing to urge you to **support at least \$3.5 billion in the FY 2011 budget for the construction of a national high-speed intercity rail network.** This is the same amount spent annually on Airport Improvement Program grants.

High-speed rail promises to boost regional economies, increasing property values, expanding labor markets, and making possible more face-to-face business interactions that are so critical to today's knowledge economy. A robust high-speed rail network will make America a more attractive place to do business and lay the foundation for a competitive, 21st century economy.

With funding requests from 40 states far exceeding the amount made available, and rail ridership increasing in each of the past seven years, there is great demand for high-speed rail. Given record unemployment, particularly in the construction sector, now is the time to make an investment that will create thousands of jobs in the near-term. In the long-term, a national high-speed rail network has the potential to rebuild America's manufacturing sector, creating permanent well-paying jobs where they are most needed.

Congress has made historic investments in high-speed rail over the past two years. It is imperative to back up these investments to ensure that high-speed rail has a bright future in America. With the U.S. population expected to grow by 70 million over the next 25 years, high-speed rail is needed to reduce the burden on our already crowded highways and airports. It will also reduce our dependence on oil, strengthening our national security. We urge you to make this crucial down payment on the country's future by allocating at least \$3.5 billion for high-speed rail in 2011.

Thank you for your leadership,

U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG)
U.S. High Speed Rail Association
All Aboard Ohio

America 2050
American Conservative Center for Public Transportation
American High Speed Rail Alliance
Apollo Alliance
Arizona Rail Passengers Association
Association for Public Transportation (APT)
Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions
Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates
BlueGreen Alliance
Californians for High Speed Rail
Cascadia Center for Regional Development
Center for Neighborhood Technology
Center on Wisconsin Strategy
Central Florida Partnership
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
Central Philadelphia Development Corporation
Connecticut Southern Railroad
Conservation Law Foundation
Consumer Federation of the Southeast
Environment America
Environmental Law and Policy Center
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Florida Consumer Action Network
Futurewise
Greater Des Moines Partnership
Green Mobility Network
GrowSmart Maine
High Speed Rail Association of Wisconsin
High Speed Rail NY Coalition
IM4Transit.org
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Iowa Chamber Alliance
Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce
Lane Transit District
LISC Phoenix
LOCUS
Maine Center for Economic Policy
Maine Rail Transit Coalition
Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance
Mayor Chris Koos, Normal, Illinois
Mayor Kitty Piercy, Eugene, Oregon
Mayor Mark Funkhouser, Kansas City, Missouri
Mayor Matthew J. Hayek, Iowa City, Iowa
Metropolitan Planning Council
Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers
Michigan Environmental Council

Michigan League of Conservation Voters
Midwest High Speed Rail Association
National Association of Railroad Passengers
National Conference of Firemen and Oilers
Natural Resources Defense Council
New England Central Railroad
New Jersey Citizen Action
North-South Rail Link Citizens Advisory Committee
Organize Now
Progress Florida
Oregon Environmental Council
Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce
Quad Cities Passenger Rail Coalition
RailCA
Reconnecting America
Save our Shores! Florida
Silicon Valley Leadership Group
Smart Growth America
Sonoran Institute
Southeast High Speed Rail Association
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southwest Rail Corridor Coalition
Tampa Bay Partnership
The People's Transit Organization
TransFormCA
Transportation Choices Coalition
Transportation Equity Network
Transportation for America
Transportation Riders United
United Transportation Union
Vermonters for a Clean Environment
Virginians for High Speed Rail
WalkSanDiego
Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers

CC: All U.S. Senators