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House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 10, 2009

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The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary

We strongly support the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) grant pre-application submitted by the Illinois and Iowa Departments of Transportation for infrastructure improvements in the proposed Chicago-Quad Cities-Iowa City passenger rail corridor. This grant program is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). We also support the joint HSIPR pre-applications submitted by a coalition of Midwestern states for infrastructure improvements to the Chicago Terminal and Midwest Train Equipment Fleet.

Congress and President Obama included passenger rail funding in ARRA because these investments can stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and modernize our transportation system. For every \$1 billion invested in passenger rail infrastructure an estimated 20,000 green jobs are created. The funding allocated for passenger rail in ARRA has the ability to transform our nation's transportation system. Americans' demand for safe, affordable, and reliable passenger rail service is at an all time high. Nearly 29 million passengers used Amtrak in 2008, marking the sixth year of increased ridership.

The Chicago-Quad Cities-Iowa City passenger rail corridor is an essential addition to the Midwest Regional Rail System. The Chicago-Quad Cities and Quad Cities-Iowa City portions of the corridor are eligible for ARRA funds and the states of Illinois and Iowa have demonstrated their commitment to making this a sustainable route. According to a 2008 Amtrak feasibility study, the Chicago-Quad Cities section requires \$22.7 million to improve track conditions for 79 mph service. The Quad Cities-Iowa City section requires \$32.5 million to improve track conditions for 79 mph service. Ridership on the Chicago-Quad Cities-Iowa City route is projected at 187,000 annually, and the state of Iowa is moving aggressively to expand rail service west to Des Moines and Omaha.

We frequently hear from constituents who look forward to the benefits of passenger rail service from Chicago to Iowa City. There is strong regional support for expanded Midwest passenger rail service and we are collaborating with leaders in multiple states and at all levels of government to complete this important project. We appreciate your leadership on Midwest passenger rail priorities and we look forward to working with you in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Bruce Braley
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Phil Hare
Member of Congress



David Loeb sack
Member of Congress