

March 27, 2009

Honorable Mitch Daniels
Governor
State of Indiana
Statehouse
Indianapolis, IN 46204

RE: Increasing the State's Investment in Passenger Rail

Dear Governor Daniels:

Under your leadership, Indiana has a once in a lifetime opportunity to receive its share of the \$9.3 billion allocated for passenger rail by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The undersigned groups urge you to act now to take the necessary initiatives to improve and expand passenger rail service in Indiana. Passenger rail offers many benefits to Hoosiers— improved mobility, new permanent jobs and transit orientated development, connectivity between major urban centers, reduced vehicle emissions, and energy savings.

As you know, Indiana is served by several Amtrak routes: the Cardinal/Hoosier State, the Capitol Limited, and the Lake Shore Limited. All of these routes experienced significant ridership increases from FY 04 to FY 08. With improved service and performance, these passenger trains can provide more travel choices for citizens, create jobs and benefit the state's manufacturing sector.

Indiana has been a participant, since its inception, in the nine-state Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) to bring faster, more frequent passenger rail service to the region. Implementation of the MWRRI will bring over 4,500 permanent new jobs to Indiana, generate an additional \$86 million of extra household income, and bring \$2.3-\$3.5 billion in user benefits to the state.

With passage of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) in late 2008, and more recently the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), Indiana has an excellent opportunity to improve and expand passenger rail service using the increased federal funding now available. All Hoosiers should be excited about the prospects for a high speed rail network in the Midwest. Moreover, this is an opportunity to address immediate needs for improvements to our current passenger rail network.

Indiana will already benefit from the passenger rail funding provided through the ARRA. Amtrak will be making improvements directly to the Beech Grove facility and also increasing its fleet through restoring rail cars at the facility.

But Indiana also has a unique opportunity to improve our current passenger rail service and to begin implementation of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. We ask you to take the following actions to ensure that Indiana is not left behind in receiving the federal funding, economic development and jobs that improved passenger rail will facilitate:

1. Initiate Indiana's implementation of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. The fully-implemented MWRRI will bring frequent, fast passenger rail service between Chicago, Indianapolis and Cincinnati, as well as new service to northern Indiana.
 - Direct INDOT to pursue, in cooperation with the other affected states, the "South of the Lake Re-Route." This critical aspect of the MWRRI will expedite all train service from Chicago to Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and the east coast. The \$9.3 billion for intercity passenger rail in the stimulus bill (distinct from the \$8.4 billion for transit) provides a unique opportunity to solve this debilitating multi-state bottleneck.
 - Direct INDOT to seek ARRA and/or PRIIA funds to complete the environmental analysis required for the MWRRI routes. Three routes in this proposed high speed rail system cross through Indiana. All are federally designated high speed rail corridors, which can provide a competitive advantage in securing federal funds. Indiana has more federally designated corridor miles than any other state in the Midwest.
2. Partner with Amtrak and the freight rail carriers to upgrade existing rail infrastructure (tracks, signals, crossings) used by Amtrak currently.
 - Direct INDOT to seek funding under ARRA and/or PRIIA for these infrastructure improvements.
 - Improvements on the Chicago to Indianapolis route (particularly that section to be included in the MWRRI) should be a high priority, followed by upgrading the entire Indiana portion of the Cardinal route. Average speed on the trip from Indianapolis to Chicago can be as slow as 34 mph, compared to the authorized maximum Amtrak speed of 79 mph.
3. Partner with Amtrak to increase the number of trains operating on existing routes. With the limited number of trains operating on Indiana's routes, and the less than desirable scheduling for these trains, many business and non-business travelers find train travel inconvenient. For example, if you wish to take the Cardinal east from Indianapolis, the only departure time is midnight.
4. Join with other Midwest states to work each year for the full annual appropriation of the PRIIA.

These actions are consistent with the Indiana Rail Plan, which contains these recommendations, among others:

- "Review on-time performance of Amtrak service in Indiana to determine extent to which inadequacies of rail infrastructure in Indiana is a contributing factor."
- "As funding becomes available, begin Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Preliminary Engineering necessary to construct the Midwest Regional Rail System in Indiana."

With the funding opportunities presented by ARRA and the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, Indiana should act now to begin building a 21st century passenger rail system for our state.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides \$8 billion in competitive grants to states for passenger rail improvements. If Indiana is to apply for passenger rail funding

under the ARRA, we must act quickly. We the undersigned ask for the opportunity to meet with you and INDOT officials soon to discuss how Indiana can move forward to improve our state's passenger rail infrastructure and service. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

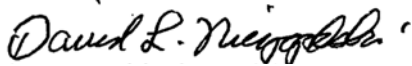


Rep. Terri Austin
Indiana House of Representatives
House Appointee,
Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail
Commission

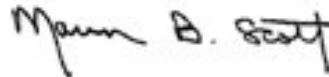


Sen. Ed Charbonneau
Indiana State Senate
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House Appointee,
Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail
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Dr. Marvin Scott, Ph.D.
Governor's Private Sector Designee,
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Robert Jackman
Former State Senator
Former Chair,
Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail
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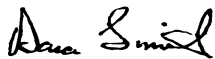


Roland M. Dorson
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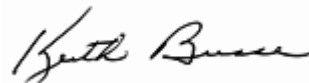


Joseph Seaman
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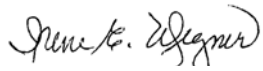
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Roger D. Sims, P.E.
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Indiana High Speed Rail Association



David Maidenber
Chapter Director
Sierra Club, Hoosier Chapter

cc: Michael Reed, Commissioner, INDOT