

**Floor Statement of  
The Honorable Corrine Brown,  
Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and  
Hazardous Materials  
On H.R. 6003, The Passenger Rail Investment  
and Improvement Act of 2008  
June 11, 2008**

I want to thank Chairman Oberstar for his leadership on developing this Amtrak Reauthorization bill and to Ranking Member Mica and Shuster for their work on this legislation.

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act provides over \$2 billion per year for Capital and Operating Grants, \$500 million per year for developing State Passenger Corridors, \$345 million per year to pay down debt, \$345 million per year for High Speed Rail Programs, and requires a plan for restoring service to the Sunset Limited line.

Amtrak's improved physical state and recent focus on customer service, along with increasing highway and airport congestion and rising gas prices, have made intercity passenger rail more popular and necessary than ever.

In fiscal year 2007, Amtrak carried more than 25.8 million passengers, the fifth straight fiscal year of record ridership. Like its ridership gains, Amtrak's financial performance has improved as well, posting approximately 1.5 billion in ticket revenue, a gain of 10.8 percent over 2006 ticket revenues and the third consecutive year that ticket revenues increased. More than just a convenient way to travel, Amtrak is also energy efficient. Rail travel is more energy efficient, and uses less fuel, than cars or airplanes. According to U.S. Department of Energy data, Amtrak is 17 percent more efficient than domestic airline travel and 21 percent more efficient than auto travel.

Current initiatives include a sleeker, more efficient Auto Train fleet, reducing annual fuel usage by 640,000 gallons; and remanufactured braking systems throughout the Amtrak fleet that will reduce energy consumption by eight percent.

Passenger rail also reduces global warming. The average passenger rail train produces 60 percent lower carbon emissions than cars and 50 percent less than an airplane. On May 10th, Amtrak celebrated National Train Day by holding events throughout the country showcasing intercity passenger rail and its importance to the nation. I celebrated National Train Day by holding events throughout my District, including press conferences and events in Jacksonville, Winter Park, and at the Sanford Auto Train station. Every event had great turnout, showing strong support for Amtrak, and I got to hear firsthand accounts of people who use Amtrak every day to go to work, and to visit friends and family all over the country. Congress also showed strong support for Amtrak and passenger rail by passing legislation supporting National Train Day by a vote of 415 to 0.

Fifty years ago, President Eisenhower created the National Highway System, which drastically changed the way we travel in this country. Today we need to do the same thing with passenger rail, and make the level of investment necessary for it to become even more successful in the future.

The American people deserve the best passenger rail system in the world, and I believe this Amtrak Reauthorization will go a long way in raising the US to its rightful place as a world leader in passenger rail.

Passage of H.R. 6003 will be the first major step in bringing our nation's intercity passenger rail system into the 21st Century. I encourage all my colleagues to support the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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