

**Statement Of
The Honorable Corrine Brown, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials
Joint Hearing on
“Confronting Freight Challenges in Southern California”
February 20, 2009**

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio, for inviting the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials to join you today for this important hearing. The American way of life relies on the U.S. transportation system to move goods and services effectively and efficiently, and with the new transportation reauthorization bill, we are going to be giving America's transportation system the facelift it desperately needs.

Unfortunately, congestion has become a major problem across all modes of surface transportation, including our railways. The U.S. Department of Transportation predicts that the demand for freight rail transportation will increase 88 percent by 2035.

As the Chair of the Rail Subcommittee I clearly see freight and passenger rail as a solution to increasing gridlock on our nation's roads, as well as the environmental and economic problems that our nation is facing. If you watched this year's Super Bowl, you would have heard that freight railroads have made major gains in fuel efficiency through training and improved locomotive technology. A single intermodal train can take up to 280 trucks off our highway. Today, one gallon of diesel fuel can move a ton of freight an average of 414 miles, a 76 percent improvement since 1980. And last year, General Electric unveiled the world's first hybrid locomotive. So it is easy to see why rail will continue to play a major role in confronting the freight challenges being faced in Southern California and across the U.S.

I'm glad we have panelists representing state and local governments, industry, and local communities, because it will take everyone working together to help relieve today's congested highways and prepare for the tremendous increase in freight shipments that are expected in the future. We all support economic development, but we must consider what impact this growth has on surrounding communities and neighborhoods.

And as we begin to develop and reauthorize the next surface transportation bill, it is critical that the need for additional rail capacity for both freight and passenger rail be addressed. The future of ground transportation is on our rails, whether it is taking freight off congested highways or moving people on high-speed rail corridors.

There is no one solution that will solve the congestion problems plaguing our nation. New and creative ideas from both government and the private sector must be utilized to increase and improve freight movement. With that, I want to welcome today's panelists and thank them for joining us. I look forward to hearing their testimony.