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**U.S. Senate urged to match \$4 billion high speed rail appropriation by House**

*MHSRA also calls for planning funds for 220-mph trains*

CHICAGO, Ill. – The Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA) today urged the U.S. Senate to match the House’s \$4 billion commitment to high speed rail to ensure continued investment in fast, sustainable transportation and green jobs. It also urged Congress to include \$100 million in planning funds for world-class 220-mph high-speed trains like those in Europe and Asia.

“It’s time for America to think big again. Earlier this year, President Obama and Congress demonstrated leadership and vision by jumpstarting high-speed rail in America,” said Rick Harnish, executive director of the MHSRA. “We must sustain the effort and catch up to the rest of the world by building an interconnected national network, including upgrading existing Amtrak routes and building ultra-fast service that moves people at 220 miles per hour, like in Asia, Europe and, soon, the Middle East.”

While the House appropriated \$4 billion in the 2010 transportation appropriations bill (H.R. 3288), the Senate only put \$1.2 billion in its version. A conference committee is to be held in coming weeks.

The appropriation in the Senate version is insufficient to meet the strong demand for intercity passenger rail projects in dozens of states. Earlier this month, the Federal Rail Administration announced it had received applications from 24 states totaling \$50 billion this year, with just \$8 billion allocated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

“Four billion dollars a year for high speed rail is a worthwhile investment that represents less than 10 percent of the federal transportation budget,” said Harnish. “We urge voters to contact their members of Congress and tell them to maintain the \$4 billion appropriation for high speed rail.”

Senators on the committee who represent proposed Midwestern high speed

projects include: Chris Bond (MO), Sam Brownback (KS), Dick Durbin (IL), Tom Harkin (IA) Herb Kohl (WI) and George Voinovich (OH). The House has not yet appointed its representatives on the conference committee. Voters can contact their legislators by visiting [www.fourbillion.com](http://www.fourbillion.com).

MHSRA is proposing 220-mph service that by 2030 would link Chicago, St. Louis, the Twin Cities, Milwaukee, Detroit, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus and Pittsburgh, putting more than 25 million people within a three-hour train ride of Chicago. Planning funds for this and other 220-mph projects around the country would allow for engineering studies to be conducted.

The benefits of 220-mph high speed rail include:

- The 300-mile trip between Chicago and St. Louis would take 1 hour and 54 minutes with 220-mph trains, less than half the expected travel time with upgrades to 110 mph.
- A Midwestern 220-mph network would generate 677,000 permanent jobs and 316,000 construction jobs, according to a proposal to the U.S. Department of Transportation by the operator of the French high-speed rail network.
- According to the same research, a Midwestern network would reduce highway travel by 4.3 billion vehicle miles per year, savings 3 million barrels per year. Studies show 220-mph high speed rail generates a quarter of the emissions of the same trips conducted by car or plane – 220-mph trains run on electricity.

If it fails to appropriate enough resources for high-speed rail, Congress runs the risk of repeating a mistake that has cost the U.S. dearly. In 1965, President Johnson and Congress joined forces to successfully create the fastest passenger train in the world. Congress did not follow through with the funding for high-speed track, and today the U.S. is decades behind the rest of the developed world and some of the developing world on high-speed rail and green transportation.

“At a time of log-jammed roads, flight delays, decrease in air service to smaller markets, growing harmful emissions and a lack of construction and manufacturing jobs, America simply cannot afford another false start on high-speed rail,” Harnish said.

**About the Midwest High Speed Rail Association**

*We primarily advocate for world-class 220-mph high-speed trains linking major Midwestern cities. We support fast, frequent and dependable trains on other routes that connect with 220-mph corridors to form a true modern regional and national rail network. We believe that a strong network of fast trains will make the Midwest a more attractive place to live and do business while slowing the growth of auto congestion and its related energy and pollution impacts.*