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Washington, DC -- Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) announced today the House Appropriations Committee has earmarked \$5 million to move forward plans for light rail service into Bergen County. The funds will be used to design stations and plan park and rides, shuttle service hubs and other aspects of a light rail network in Bergen County.

"Bringing light rail into Bergen County is vital to relieving congestion on our roads and improving our quality of life," Rothman said. "I am glad I was able to secure funding that brings light rail service for Bergen County residents one step closer to reality." The funds can be used for planning on any of three proposed routes in Bergen County that would link up to the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail (HBLR). Routes under consideration are: Cross-County, Northern Branch, and West Shore Lines.

Rothman has been very active in his efforts to bring light rail service into Bergen County. He has fought for funding to continue construction of the HBLR. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, the inclusion of \$5 million in the FY 2002 Transportation Appropriations bill is his latest effort. The bill is expected to be taken up by the full House of Representatives later this month.

Rothman recently joined with local, state and federal officials in a light rail summit to discuss the best ways to bring light rail into Bergen County. Ultimately, Rothman believes that it must be up to local officials to determine the best route. This \$5 million appropriation will aid with planning that can be applied to any of the three lines through Bergen County that are now being considered.

"These funds are a down payment on bringing light rail into Bergen County," Rothman said.

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