

Vote to Increase Funding to Improve Amtrak's Northeast Corridor

(Washington, DC)-Yesterday, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) voted to increase federal funding for Amtrak over the next five years. Specifically, he supported legislation, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (H.R.6003), to provide \$14.9 billion for Amtrak from Fiscal Years 2009 to 2013. That amount includes \$4.2 billion set aside for capital grants that would largely support work to improve service for New Jerseyans and others who rely on passenger rail along the Northeast Corridor. The bill passed the House by a vote of 311 to 104.

For Immediate Release: June 12, 2008

Contact: Kimberly Allen, (202) 226-8364; (202) 420-1524 [cell]

Rothman Votes for Funding to Improve Amtrak's Northeast Corridor

Says Energy Crisis Makes Passenger Rail More Important than Ever

(Washington, DC)-Yesterday, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) voted to increase federal funding for Amtrak over the next five years. Specifically, he supported legislation, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (H.R.6003), to provide \$14.9 billion for Amtrak from Fiscal Years 2009 to 2013. That amount includes \$4.2 billion set aside for capital grants that would largely support work to improve service for New Jerseyans and others who rely on passenger rail along the Northeast Corridor. The bill passed the House by a vote of 311 to 104.

Describing his support for this bill during tight fiscal times, Rothman said: "With gas prices reaching over \$4 per gallon, Americans need a national energy policy that balances immediate relief with a long-term goal of decreasing our dependence on foreign oil. I view investments in our national passenger rail system, especially the widely used Northeast Corridor, as a critical part of that plan.

"Amtrak is an excellent mass transit option to get cars off the road, reduce pollution from vehicles and decrease our dependence on fuel. Amtrak also provides economic and quality-of-life benefits for passengers. For less than we spend every two months in Iraq, we can invest in the future of Amtrak."

Past years of inadequate support for Amtrak by the Bush Administration and a Republican-controlled Congress have resulted in crumbling infrastructure and spotty service. The current Congress is working on legislation such as the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act to renew our national commitment to passenger rail and mass transit infrastructure.

The Senate has already passed its version of this legislation, authored by Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), which would provide \$11.4 billion over five years. Now, the House and Senate must negotiate a compromise.

Rothman and Lautenberg are members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, respectively, which make decisions about all federal spending. Their strong support for Amtrak funding will be important when the Fiscal Year 2009 transportation spending bill is completed. While H.R.6003 authorizes funding, only a federal appropriations bill can spend that money.

For details about major provisions of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, visit <http://transportation.house.gov/Media/File/Rail/20080520/HR6003%20Summary.pdf> .

###