

**1000 Friends of Connecticut
Association for Public Transportation
Business Council of Fairfield County
Connecticut Association for Community Transportation
City of Lebanon, New Hampshire
Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association
Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby
Connecticut Fund for the Environment
Conservation Law Foundation
Connecticut League of Conservation Voters Education Fund
ConnPIRG
Environment Connecticut
MassPIRG
MetroHartford Alliance
New Hampshire Businesses for Transportation and Infrastructure
New Hampshire Railroad Revitalization Association
Partnership for Strong Communities
Pioneer Valley Advocates for Commuter Rail
Regional Plan Association—Connecticut
Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Urban Edge Associates
Vermont Rail Action Network**

August 20, 2009

Joseph C. Szabo
Federal Railroad Administration
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Support for the New Haven-Springfield Commuter Rail Line

Dear Administrator Szabo:

Several weeks ago, with the strong support of Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell, the State of Connecticut submitted a pre-application for High Speed Rail stimulus funds to be used for implementation of the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) rail project. The NHHS project includes Massachusetts as a key partner, and is a critically important component of the joint *Vision for the New England High-Speed and Intercity Rail Network* recently released by the New England state transportation agencies with the bi-partisan support of New England's governors.

Extensive support for the NHHS project exists not only at the state level in Connecticut and Massachusetts, but also at the federal level. The list of public supporters is long and, at the federal level, currently includes Senators Edward Kennedy and John Kerry, and Representatives Jim McGovern, Richard Neal, Niki Tsongas and John Olver of Massachusetts; as well as Senator Christopher Dodd and Representatives Chris Murphy, Rosa DeLauro and John Larson of Connecticut.

We write to add the advocacy community's backing to the NHHS project's growing list of supporters.

As advocacy groups representing varying interests, we do not always agree on all issues. However, we do agree that federal support for the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail corridor is integral to move the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions into the 21st century.

This rail corridor is an ideal candidate for federal High Speed Rail stimulus funding and should be viewed as a project of regional significance by the Federal Rail Administration (FRA). While the project is primarily based in Connecticut, it also holds potential benefits for the greater New England region. For example, according to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission 2006 *Briefing Report: The Economic Impact of the Proposed New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Commuter Rail Line* and the ConnDOT Implementation Plan, it is expected that the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line will:

- Reduce the number of vehicles on roads by approximately 6,000 cars each day
- Increase the connectivity of rail and bus systems at 12 train stations, including the proposed Hartford-New Britain Busway
- Foster better linkages between Bradley International Airport and the region
- Generate close to 1,000 jobs
- Generate \$459 million in new economic development and \$38 million a year in new tax revenues

These are just a few of the many benefits that the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail project will bring to New England. In addition, improvements to the rail corridor will reduce travel times as well as increase reliability on the existing Vermonter route which links Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Canada. Investment will also lay the foundation to connect several Connecticut and Massachusetts cities with the economic spine of New England and take the first step towards long term travel-time savings between New York and Boston.

Finally, the project fits seamlessly into FRA's strategic plan for High Speed Rail. For example, implementation will create efficient and multi-modal transportation options; promote smarter, more livable communities with greater affordable housing opportunities centered around transit service; bolster economic development and economic competitiveness; and protect our environment by reducing the number of both vehicle miles traveled and the number of idling vehicles along the already gridlocked I-91 corridor; all preferred outcomes found within the strategic plan.

Once again we urge you to support the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail corridor application and to recommend stimulus dollars towards its implementation.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

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Vice President
Regional Plan Association-Connecticut

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Curt Johnson
Director of Programs, Senior Attorney
Connecticut Fund for the Environment

John Pagini
Professional Development Officer
Connecticut Chapter-APA

Oz Griebel
President and CEO
MetroHartford Alliance

Peter Griffin
President
NH Railroad Revitalization Association

Lori Brown
Executive Director
CT League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

Diane Randall
Executive Director
Partnership for Strong Communities

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City of Lebanon, NH

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Christopher Parker
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Vermont Rail Action Network

Heidi Green
President
1000 Friends of Connecticut

Cc. Senator Edward Kennedy, Massachusetts
Senator John Kerry, Massachusetts
Senator Christopher Dodd, Connecticut
Representative Jim McGovern, Massachusetts
Representative Richard Neal, Massachusetts
Representative Niki Tsongas, Massachusetts
Representative John Olver, Massachusetts
Representative Rosa DeLauro, Connecticut
Representative John Larson, Connecticut
Representative Chris Murphy, Connecticut
Governor Deval Patrick, Massachusetts
Governor M. Jodi Rell, Connecticut
Joseph Marie, ConnDOT Commissioner
Karen Rae, FRA Deputy Administrator