

6/11/2008- Congressman Sires Votes for Funding to Improve Amtrak and Intercity Passenger Rail Services

WASHINGTON D.C.- On June 11, 2008 the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6003, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, to reauthorize Amtrak and improve intercity passenger rail services...

For immediate release

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WASHINGTON D.C.- On June 11, 2008 the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6003, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, to reauthorize Amtrak and improve intercity passenger rail services with a veto proof margin of 311-104.

“Today we are in the midst of a national revival for intercity passenger rail and there has never been a greater need for rail services as gas prices and highway and air travel congestion continue to increase,” stated Congressman Sires. Amtrak ridership rose to record levels for the fifth year in a row, exceeding 25.8 million passengers in 2007. Ticket sales also experienced revenue growth for the third year in a row to more than \$1.5 billion.

H.R. 6003 will assist Amtrak and states with the opportunity to grow their intercity passenger rail services, which in turn will give Americans more affordable and sustainable choices. In particular, H.R. 6003 would authorize \$14.4 billion over the next five years for Amtrak capital and operating grants, intercity passenger grants, and high-speed rail. Approximately \$4.2 billion will be provided to Amtrak in capital grants that will assist in many important maintenance and projects aimed to increase service reliability and on-time performance. A new State Capital Grant program will also be created for intercity passenger rail capital projects to encourage State investment in intercity passenger rail routes. In addition, funds will be granted to establish high-speed rail corridors between cities to improve interconnectivity across different regions of the U.S.

If signed into law, this will be the first Amtrak reauthorization in more than a decade. “In addition to providing the capital and resources necessary to bringing the American rail system into the 21st Century, this legislation will meet the growing demand for a more cost-efficient and environmentally friendly means of transportation,” concluded Congressman Sires.

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