

January 23, 2002

The Honorable Richard A. Gephardt
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative Gephardt:

The September 11 attacks on America instantly revealed the importance to our national security of a balanced, multi-modal, shock-resistant, and secure transportation system.

Securing our transportation system at all levels is viewed as prerequisites to eliminating the anxiety that has accelerated the nation's economic downturn, and to achieving economic security for the nation. Any serious discussion of the post-September transportation future cannot just be about aviation and highways B it has to be visionary and include the reauthorization of Amtrak and the development of a national rail policy for the 21st century.

The nation's mayors strongly urge you and the President to develop a national rail policy that directs greater and sustained investment in Amtrak and passenger rail service. Last year, the U.S. Conference of Mayors hosted a National Rail Summit, which called for a stronger federal commitment to the nation's inter-city rail network, with a focus on high-speed rail, accelerated investment in metropolitan rail infrastructure and new incentives to stimulate increased private sector participation. Mississippi Senator Trent Lott addressed the mayors and is most supportive of Amtrak. The time has come to increase our national investment in our rail infrastructure and build out the third leg of our nation's transportation systems.

The third leg of our nation's transportation must include Amtrak. For the past 30 years Amtrak has been the sole provider of intercity rail passenger service and understands the operational needs and demands of this important passenger service. We strongly request that you and the President begin the reauthorization of Amtrak early this year to ensure uninterrupted passenger rail service to our cities throughout the nation. Our nation's mayors are on the front lines of America's growing transportation crisis and we recognize the importance of a transportation system that is both balanced enough and secure enough to allow the nation to function during a crises.

Even if the horror of September 11 did not happen, the national transportation system would be approaching a s of emergency right now. The last push to build new transportation infrastructure in the United States was during 1950s and 1960s, when the nation had only half the population of today, and the economy was a small fraction c current size. Our nation is hamstrung when one element of the transportation system breaks down, as we experienced on September 11th.

This year presents a tremendous opportunity to forge a new and bipartisan national rail policy for the 21st century. As the nation has seen in the last few months, a transportation system that provides alternatives is more urgent now than ever before. With strong backing from mayors across the nation, we stand ready to

work with you and the President on this urgent national policy issue.

Sincerely,

Marc H. Morial	Thomas M. Menino	James A. Garner
Mayor of New Orleans	Mayor of Boston	Mayor of Hempstead
President	Vice-President	USCM Executive Committee
U.S. Conference of Mayors	U.S. Conference of Mayors	

H. Brent Coles	John Robert Smith	Kenneth L. Barr
Mayor of Boise	Mayor of Meridian	Mayor of Fort Worth
Past President	Co-Chair on Rail Issues	Chair, Transportation and Communications
U.S. Conference of Mayors	U.S. Conference of Mayors	U.S. Conference of Mayors

Patrick Henry Hays	J. Thomas Cochran
Mayor of North Little Rock	Executive Director
USCM Executive Committee	U.S. Conference of Mayors