

Statement of Support for Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act (S 1125)

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) is in full support of the Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act (S 1125), which intends to provide incentives to expand rail infrastructure and help ease highway congestion to assist in meeting the 67 percent spike in freight traffic predicted by the Department of Transportation by the year 2020.

Freight and goods movement is at the heart of the American economy. The nation's \$1.75 trillion transportation infrastructure makes it possible to move \$6 trillion worth of freight each year. Transportation services make up a substantial portion of the economy—about 11 percent of the gross domestic product. Over 13 million people work directly or indirectly in transportation services.

Despite the importance of freight and goods movement to the economy, investment in the system has lagged behind amounts needed to accommodate growth. To simply maintain the nation's already crowded interstates and highways at their current level of service, about \$34 billion more is needed per year. Even more money is needed to actually improve road conditions for motorists and truckers. Railroads will need to invest up to \$175 billion over the next 20 years, principally through private financing sources. The Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act is a step towards a larger solution.

Promoting heavy rail as a way to move both goods and passengers continues to be a priority for NARC's multi-modal transportation program. NARC also continues to support and work with Class I, II, and III railroads as a means to ease cross country and intercity container congestion. Utilizing our massive rail infrastructure and infusing new capital into maintenance and new track is a needed component of a national freight policy.

About NARC

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) serves as the national voice for regionalism by advocating for regional cooperation as the most effective way to address a variety of community planning and development opportunities and issues.

NARC's member organizations are composed of multiple local governments that work together to serve American communities - large and small, urban and rural.

For over 40 years, NARC has represented the interests of its members and has advanced regional cooperation through effective interaction and advocacy with Congress, Federal officials and other related agencies and interest groups. NARC's agenda includes, but is not limited to, transportation, community and economic development, the environment, homeland security and regional preparedness, and a variety of community issues undertaken by its member organizations.

NARC provides its members valuable information and research on key national policy issues, federal policy developments, best practices, and conducts enriching training sessions, conferences, workshops and satellite telecasts.