



National Association of Regional Councils

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April 30, 2007

The Honorable Gordon Smith
Ranking Member
Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure,
Safety and Security Subcommittee
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Smith,

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), representing local elected officials and units of government, including regional councils, councils of governments and metropolitan planning organizations nationwide, strongly supports the passage of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2007 (S. 294), authorizing funding for Amtrak improvements and other purposes.

Passenger rail, like any mode of transportation, is more effective and profitable with government subsidy. Amtrak has been operating without authorizing legislation since 2002. As a result, many important tasks cannot be undertaken, including debt restructuring, high speed corridor studies and research. The passage of S. 294 is imperative as it would begin to revive much needed rehabilitation, as well as provide for programs to improve rail security.

A fuel efficient and environmentally-friendly mode, Amtrak is an important part of the U.S. transportation system by providing the only intercity rail service and connection for many small and rural communities. For this reason alone, it is critical Amtrak receive adequate government funding.

NARC also promotes and supports the following for Amtrak:

- Cooperative agreements between Amtrak and commuter rail systems. Amtrak has established successful partnerships with commuter rail systems (such as MARC in Maryland) to provide ticketing, station rehabilitation, and joint service to stations. These types of agreements allow states to shoulder a portion of the costs (usually 20%), while Amtrak can provide better rolling stock service.
- Cease making a political issue of Amtrak funding in TTHUD. Once S. 294 passes, the funding detailed within should be adhered to by appropriators.

In addition to our support, NARC offers its assistance for this or any transportation issue. We welcome your thoughts and look forward to working with you throughout the 110th Congress. Feel free to contact me at any time at 202.986.1032, x.213 or cmoore@narc.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cameron Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Cameron Moore
Executive Director