

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2009

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) will make a groundbreaking federal investment in passenger rail service across the nation, expanding service to new cities and populations. Most of Ohio has not had passenger rail service of any kind since 1971. Federal stimulus funds for high-speed rail are an excellent opportunity to bring rail to one of the most densely populated corridors in the country.

It is my understanding that the State of Ohio will seek ARRA funding for start-up service connecting Cincinnati, Columbus, and Cleveland—commonly referred to as the 3-C Corridor. This line has already been designated a High-Speed Rail Corridor by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Restarting service between these major metropolitan areas and points in between, as well as increasing existing Amtrak service along Ohio's northern tier, is a necessary first step toward full implementation of the Ohio Hub, the state's comprehensive high-speed rail plan. Investment in intercity passenger rail service would bring mobility to Ohio's citizens, help revitalize Ohio's cities, and spur further rail development across the region.

I strongly believe that your strategy for allocation of ARRA funds should set aside at least \$1 billion for designated high-speed rail corridors that do not currently have passenger service. By giving priority to these corridors, the groundwork would be laid for high-speed rail in the future. Restoring 3-C service would use 260 miles of existing track that touches 5.9 million Ohioans, almost 60% of the state's population.

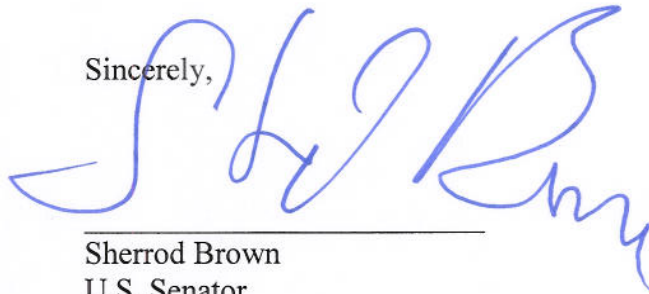
Studies indicate that expanding passenger rail service in Ohio could ultimately create 16,700 permanent jobs, in addition to tens of thousands of construction jobs, generate more than \$3 billion in development near stations, and create an annual \$80 million windfall for the state's tourism industry. Expansion of rail service to the interior of Ohio will bring new travel opportunities, promote economic development in cities along the rail line, and reduce strain on roads, highways, and bridges. Just as this proposal will link Ohio's largest cities, it is also crucial to greater connectivity and the success of passenger rail across the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic.

Because service on the 3-C corridor would utilize existing infrastructure, it is my understanding that with the right level of investment passenger service could begin as soon as 2010. Such quick turnaround on this project would keep with the spirit of the economic recovery legislation; creating jobs in the short term while investing in our infrastructure to ensure economic growth in the long term.

As FRA develops the High-Speed Rail Strategic Plan, I urge you to adopt a broad-based funding strategy for the \$8 billion in ARRA funding for high-speed passenger rail development and to set aside at least \$1 billion for passenger rail service on designated HSR corridors currently without service. Recent history demonstrates that successful high-speed passenger rail projects have their foundation in a robust, incremental development of rail infrastructure and improvements starting from conventional speed service.

I appreciate the Administration's dedication to the expansion of passenger rail in the United States and firmly believe that rail in Ohio is essential to the ultimate success of this vision. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to working with you to bring passenger rail to more Americans.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senator

cc: FRA
Amtrak
VPOTUS