

Rep. Doris Matsui Votes for Legislation to Invest in Rail and Mass Transit

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Washington, D.C. - Today, Rep. Doris Matsui (CA-05) joined her colleagues in passing the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (H.R. 6003) to modernize and expand Amtrak and other intercity passenger rail service and infrastructure.

"With the price of gas over \$4 a gallon, people are exploring alternative options for travel. In Sacramento, we already have a thriving light rail system and the Capitol Corridor in place. The bill we passed today will invest in passenger rail and ensure that we have viable options to lessen congestion on our roads and engage in greener transportation alternatives," said Rep. Matsui.

The bill reauthorizes Amtrak through FY 2013. Amtrak's authorization had expired in 2002. The bill also creates a new capital grants program for states to provide new or improved intercity passenger rail. Sacramento will be well-positioned to benefit from the grants program because of the demonstrated success of the Capitol Corridor service.

"In many ways, Sacramento is a laboratory for the rest of the country. We have proven that we can put in place mass

transit systems that are good for our environment, and good for our local economy. The ridership gains and economic success of these systems in Sacramento will serve as an example to cities across the country as they examine their own regional transportation systems," said Rep. Matsui.

H.R. 6003:

Creates a new grant program for intercity passenger rail services. In an effort to encourage the development of new and improved intercity passenger rail services, the bill creates a new State Capital Grant program for intercity passenger rail capital projects. The bill authorizes \$2.5 billion (\$500 million per year) over the next five years for grants to states to pay for the capital costs of facilities and equipment necessary to provide new or improved intercity passenger rail. The federal share of the grants is up to 80 percent. The Transportation Department would award these grants on a competitive basis for projects based on economic performance, expected ridership, and other factors.

To improve commuter rail service, creates a mechanism for completing stalled negotiations between commuter and freight rail. Currently, no federal guidelines exist to mediate disputes between commuter rail providers and freight railroads over use of freight rail tracks or rights-of-way, nor is there a standard forum for negotiating commuter rail operating agreements. The bill establishes a forum at the Surface Transportation Board to help complete stalled commuter rail negotiations, helping our rail network operate as efficiently as possible.

In an effort to expand passenger rail, also authorizes funding for 11 high-speed rail corridors. The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission recommended that the United States establish a high-speed rail network that spans the entire country. The bill authorizes \$1.75 billion over the next five years for grants to states and/or Amtrak to finance the construction and equipment for 11 authorized high-speed rail corridors - including in California. The federal share of the grants is up to 80 percent. The Transportation Department would award these grants on a competitive basis for projects based on economic performance, expected ridership, and other factors.

• Invests in improving Amtrak by increasing Amtrak capital and operating grants. The bill calls for increasing Amtrak capital grants -- authorizing \$4.2 billion to Amtrak over the next five years for capital grants. These capital grants will help Amtrak bring the Northeast Corridor to a state-of-good-repair, procure new rolling stock, rehabilitate existing bridges, as well as make additional capital improvements and maintenance over its entire network. The bill also calls for increasing Amtrak operating grants -- authorizing \$3.0 billion to Amtrak over the next five years for operating grants. The operating grants will help Amtrak pay salaries, health costs, overtime pay, fuel costs, facilities, and train maintenance and operations.

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