

October 25, 2010

## **Harkin, Durbin Announce \$230 Million in Funding for New Rail Service from Chicago to Iowa City Through the Quad Cities**

*Project will create 588 jobs per year with service scheduled to begin in 2015*

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) announced that \$230 million in federal funding was awarded today by the Department of Transportation for a new Amtrak route between Chicago and Iowa City through the Quad Cities. The project – scheduled for completion in 2015 – will create 588 jobs per year for the first four years of design and construction. Once initiated, the new service is expected to increase business activity at \$25 million per year.

"I applaud the Obama Administration's commitment to increasing transportation opportunities in the Midwest, which will get a much-needed boost with this funding. I also commend Governor Culver, who has been a leader in our state on this effort working with Congressmen Boswell, Braley and Loebsack," said Harkin. "Passenger rail from Iowa City to Chicago will create jobs now and, once it is a part of a broad intercity network to Des Moines and all around the Midwest, will help our economy in the long-term as well as add convenience for many Iowans. In order to be truly successful, this rail service must connect to a high-speed intercity network. Planning and building this network is already underway."

"Securing such a significant investment from the federal government wouldn't have been possible without the coordinated efforts of state and local officials in Illinois and Iowa and the strong community support for expanding Amtrak service to the Quad Cities," said Durbin. "And this is a project that will see a return on that investment. Not only will it create nearly 600 jobs per year and stimulate economic activity, but for every dollar spent, the public will see \$1.70 returned in reduced costs for transportation, fuel and pollution. I thank Secretary LaHood, Senator Harkin, Governors Quinn and Culver and Congressman Hare for seeing the potential in this route becoming an integral part of the Midwest rail network."

The new Chicago – Quad Cities – Iowa City route will provide two daily round-trips and carry trains traveling at speeds up to 79 miles per hour (mph) with an expected trip time of less than 5 hours. The long-term vision for the line includes expanding the frequency of trains to offer more than two daily round-trip trains; extending the route; and making additional infrastructure investments to increase speeds from 79 mph to 90 mph, or even 110 mph.

"The Green Line between Chicago to Iowa City—and, in the near future, on to Des Moines and to western Iowa—which has been funded today in an extraordinarily tough competition with passenger rail proposals across America, will set a new national standard for reliable, cost-effective, fuel-efficient passenger rail service in the United States," said Iowa Governor Chet Culver. "This will not only create jobs and spur development, but work toward the Culver-Judge Administration's goal of making Iowa the best-connected state in America. Iowa's families and business travelers deserve world-class travel options—and passenger rail service needs to be one of those options. This new development in Iowa transportation history builds upon successful efforts by the Culver-Judge Administration to secure funding to improve and maintain passenger rail service through southern Iowa. Today's announcement will also inspire efforts to establish new passenger rail from Chicago to Dubuque and points westward from there."

"Illinois is quickly becoming the rail hub of the Midwest, and this new route means that for the first time, passengers can travel from Chicago to the Quad Cities - and beyond - quickly and effortlessly," said Illinois Governor Pat Quinn. "I would like to thank Senator Durbin and Secretary LaHood for their work to help us continue

our economic recovery by putting hundreds of Illinoisans each year back to work expanding Illinois' railway infrastructure."

Illinois and Iowa are part of a nine state regional effort in the Midwest to build an integrated high speed rail network. These states have already completed careful planning and made significant investments to modernize our existing passenger rail system. The Midwest rail system, with Chicago as its hub, could provide 3,000 miles of high speed rail service and serve 90 percent of the 60.3 million people living in its nine-state region. A significant federal investment into this region could create a rail system that could carry nearly as much traffic as regional air service.

Last week, \$10 million in funding was awarded by the Department of Transportation for the construction of an intermodal station which will serve as the Quad Cities stop for Amtrak service in downtown Moline. The proposed Intermodal Station located adjacent to the Centre Station transit facility will spur development in downtown Moline and throughout the Quad Cities region. Construction is expected to generate nearly 750 construction jobs and result in the retention or creation of 1,100 private sector jobs. An additional \$47 million in private investment will come to the Quad Cities as a result of the transit oriented development centered on the Amtrak station.

"This investment is a much-needed first step in bringing high-speed passenger rail through Des Moines and across the state of Iowa," said Congressman Leonard Boswell (D-IA), a senior Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. "Not only will this grant create jobs, but it will lay the foundation for future growth in Iowa and the Midwest. Iowans deserve to have access to the same transportation options available on the coasts."

"Today's announcement is great news for Iowa," said Congressman Bruce Braley (D-IA). "The Chicago to Iowa City route will create jobs and bring significant economic gains to Eastern Iowa. I'm proud of the work I've done with my colleagues in Iowa and Illinois to make this route possible. This is one more step to create jobs in the short term and putting Iowa's economy back on track."

"This funding is critical as we work to rebuild our economy now and will lay the groundwork for Iowa's future growth," said Congressman Dave Loebsack (D-IA). "Passenger rail will help connect our cities and towns and it will help Iowa businesses and communities compete and grow. It has been a collaborative public-private partnership and I was pleased to be able to work with local and state business and community leaders to move this project forward. I look forward to the good-paying jobs and continued economic development that passenger rail will bring to Iowa and will continue to work to ensure that service eventually reaches Des Moines and Omaha."

"The good news keeps pouring in for the Quad Cities. This funding will effectively complete the Quad Cities-Chicago Amtrak route," said Congressman Phil Hare (D-IL). "This project is a winner for our entire community. It will create jobs, spur economic development, and provide a safe and convenient transportation alternative. I couldn't be prouder to have played a role in making this a reality."

Today's funding is part of the \$2.5 billion Congress appropriated in Fiscal Year 2010 for high speed rail corridors and intercity passenger rail service (HSPIR Program). The Department of Transportation received 20 applications from 10 states totaling \$7.8 billion for high-speed rail corridor development programs and 57 applications from 18 states totaling \$700 million for smaller, individual projects within rail corridors that are ready to begin construction. There is \$1 billion included for the HSPIR Program in the 2011 Senate Transportation Appropriations bill which was approved by the Appropriations Committee and is awaiting action by the full Senate.

The long-term goal of the HSIPR Program – created in June 2009 – is to build an efficient, high-speed and emerging high speed passenger rail network connecting major population centers 100 to 600 miles apart. In the short-term, the program aims to aid economic recovery efforts and lay the foundation for this high-speed passenger rail network through targeted investments. Earlier this year, \$8 billion was awarded nationwide under this program including \$1.1 billion to bring high speed rail to the Chicago-St. Louis corridor.

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