

Statement on H.R. 6003, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008

Mr. Chairman, today I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6003, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. I am glad to see this bill on the House floor, as it shows a commitment by this Congress to strengthening and improving America's passenger rail system and moving Amtrak forward...

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I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation. This bill includes development of new intercity passenger rail services, including \$500 million per year to states to cover the capital costs of investing in new intercity passenger rail services. By investing in new rail infrastructure, this legislation creates jobs, increases tourism and spurs economic development in the communities impacted by new rail service.

In Iowa's First District, this bill will help fund two new routes that would both increase rail services and provide economic benefits. The routes between Chicago and the Quad Cities and Chicago to Dubuque, Iowa would encourage economic development in both Iowa and Illinois, while creating local jobs and decreasing traffic and congestion. Both of these routes would provide another piece to a new transportation corridor through the center of the country, which would be beneficial for business and recreation from coast-to-coast.

I am also glad to see Section 220 up for House passage today that includes the 'Study of the Use of Biobased Lubricants.' This language instructs the Federal Railroad Administration to issue a report on the feasibility of using readily biodegradable lubricants by freight and passenger railroads, partly through comparisons of these lubricants with the petroleum-based lubricants traditionally used. The National Ag-Based Lubricants Center (NABL) at the University of Northern Iowa would be a perfect partner for the Federal Railroad Administration in this study, as NABL's expertise and resources in biobased lubricants is unmatched, and it is the only entity whose primary mission is the research and testing of agricultural-based lubricants.

I thank Chairman Oberstar, Chairwoman Brown, and the rest of Transportation & Infrastructure Committee for their work on this legislation, and I look forward to seeing these important changes becoming law.