

Braley Named to Amtrak Bill Conference Committee

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Braley is an original co-sponsor of the Amtrak bill. Braley worked to shepherd the bill through the Transportation Committee, of which he is a member, and he pushed for passage of the bill on the House floor.

"I'm excited by the opportunity to continue working on the Amtrak bill and to support Iowa's passenger rail needs," Braley said. "With gas prices now over four dollars per gallon, it's time to invest in alternative forms of transportation. The Amtrak bill will help make passenger rail service between Dubuque and the Quad Cities to Chicago a reality. This bill takes the first step to make affordable, efficient passenger rail service available for more Iowans."

The House-passed 2008 Amtrak Reauthorization Bill includes language to create a new, \$500 million per year 'State Capital Grant Program,' which would award federal grants to states for the construction of new passenger rail service between US cities. Proposed passenger rail service between Chicago and the Quad Cities and Chicago and Dubuque would be eligible to apply for funding under this program.

The bill also includes Braley's provision mandating a Federal Railroad Administration study into the viability of the widespread use of biolubricants in freight and passenger rail as an alternative to petroleum-based lubricants. The University of Northern Iowa's National Ag-Based Lubricant Center (NABL), the country's leading biolubricant research center, is located in Iowa's First District.

The Amtrak Reauthorization bill passed the House last month, and the Senate bill passed last October (H.R. 6003/S. 294). The conference committee will meet to resolve differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill so

that a final version can be brought before both chambers.