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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 16, 2009

Joseph Szabo  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Szabo:

I write you today to offer my strong support for the state of Ohio's pending application for high speed rail project funds made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The proposal would restart passenger rail service—for the first time in more than 30 years—between Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati.

In a recent Wall Street Journal article on the Federal Rail Administration's ARRA efforts, you noted that "We have to come away with very tangible success." I share your view and believe that projects that strengthen our national rail system and provide the most bang for our buck should be given top priority. The Ohio proposal would achieve both of these goals in a timely manner; it is my understanding that service could begin by 2011.

With startup service, millions of Ohioans who currently lack rail as a viable travel option would be connected to some of our nation's largest rail hubs like New York, Chicago, and Washington, DC. A recent Amtrak study found significant demand for passenger rail in Ohio, and with 6 million people living along the Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati corridor, this market is significantly underserved. Factoring in that 60% of the nation's population lives within 600 miles of my state, it is clear that we cannot have a legitimate national rail plan without Ohio.

I applaud the President and his transportation team for their dedication and vision to a high speed passenger rail system. In this time of continued economic uncertainty, it is crucial that we focus our resources on projects that produce significant, concrete results. Ohio's quick start application meets this standard and is consistent with the spirit of ARRA: investments made now would create jobs, spur economic development, and encourage the long term growth our country needs in the years ahead.

I strongly urge you and your staff to give serious consideration to this project.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator