



**For Immediate Release**

### **OneRail Coalition Offers Input into DOT's National Rail Plan**

Washington DC, May 11, 2010 –In comments filed with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on the development of the National Rail Plan, the OneRail Coalition called on the federal government to ensure passenger and freight rail are included in assessments for additional system capacity along with highway and aviation options.

In 2008 Congress directed FRA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), to develop a National Rail Plan. OneRail, a coalition of environmental advocates, passengers, rail labor, suppliers, operators and railroads, solicited input from its members to reach a broad-based consensus on the future of rail policy in the U.S. and filed its comments with the FRA last week.

“It is time to rebalance transportation policy in the U.S. to promote rail equally with highways and other transportation investments,” said Anne Canby, president of the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership and one of the founders of OneRail. “The development of a National Rail Plan lays out a comprehensive long-term view for rail transportation in America that gives us an historic opportunity to align the future of our transportation system with critical national priorities.”

OneRail urged that DOT's National Rail Plan:

- Call for establishing a ***national framework for transportation investment*** in the context of an overall multimodal transportation network, as well as the need to adopt specific goals and performance outcomes.
- Continue dedicated funding for commuter rail, ***establish new dedicated funding sources*** for high-speed and intercity passenger rail (HSIPR) and treat intercity and regional passenger and freight rail infrastructure projects as eligible expenditures to the degree that new revenues outside existing Highway Trust Fund user payments are utilized to fund the federal surface transportation program. The Plan should support policies that provide matching funds and incentives for rail expansion.
- Maintain a strong focus on ***safety and security***, relying on common sense and performance-based regulations, including a flexible approach to new rail safety technologies.
- Recognize the complexities of ***passenger and freight rail partnerships***, and recognize that delivering successful new HSIPR corridor services will require significant capital investment, as well as a new level of analysis and consistent communication among and between freight railroads, passenger operators, public officials at all levels of government, and other stakeholders.

- Support development of a renewed U.S. passenger rail equipment **manufacturing industry** through a vision for sustained equipment purchases and equipment life-cycle policies that avoid “boom or bust” procurement cycles.
- Boost **rail workforce development** and planning leadership to support the growth of freight, regional, intercity passenger and high-speed rail corridors, and foster the rail workforce of tomorrow.

Finally, the OneRail Coalition urged inclusion in the National Rail Plan of five-, 10- and 20-year milestones that measure metrics such as the percent of population with access to intercity passenger rail service, growth in market share for freight and passenger rail and capture of identified public benefits.

“For the first time, major rail stakeholders united to speak with one voice on national rail policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” said Canby. “We urge the Administration to integrate rail passenger and freight policies in ways that enable a fair comparison against investments in other modes, including consideration of long-term societal impacts such as continued dependence on foreign oil, reduced carbon emissions, congestion mitigation, and increased safety.”

OneRail’s comments were reviewed at today’s forum “Meeting the Current & Future Challenges in High Speed Rail,” sponsored by [Railway Supply Institute](#), [OneRail Coalition](#), [Government of Quebec](#), and Women in Government Relations. OneRail’s complete comments can be found [here](#).

### ***About OneRail***

The OneRail Coalition supports expanding the role of rail by providing for additional investment in the nation's rail infrastructure to create American jobs, de-congest chokepoints, put more freight and passengers on fuel-efficient trains, and reduce our nation’s greenhouse gas emissions.

OneRail's members include: the American Public Transportation Association, American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association, Amtrak, Association of American Railroads, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, National Association of Railroad Passengers, Natural Resources Defense Council, National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association, Railway Supply Institute, States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Surface Transportation Policy Partnership, Transportation Communications International Union/IAM, and United Transportation Union, as well as Alstom (an Associate Supporter). More information is available at [www.onerail.org](http://www.onerail.org)

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Media contacts:

Robin Buckley  
Buckley & Kaldenbach, Inc.  
703.533.9805  
[robin@buckleykaldenbach.com](mailto:robin@buckleykaldenbach.com)

Isabel Kaldenbach  
Buckley & Kaldenbach, Inc.  
703.979.3076  
[isabel@buckleykaldenbach.com](mailto:isabel@buckleykaldenbach.com)