

Castle Praises Initiative for Increased Security on Freight Rail, Calls for Passage of His Comprehensive Rail Security Legislation -- December 15, 2006

Wilmington, DE -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle today praised the new rule proposed by the Homeland Security Department to require railroads to frequently track tanker cars for "toxic inhalation hazards" and restrict them from leaving cars unattended or parked for long periods.

"For far too long rail security has not been a priority in this country. In Delaware we have a situation where toxic chemicals are being shipped through heavily populated areas, and while CSX and other transporters have done their best to ensure the security of these shipments, it is imperative that we do more. Time and again terrorists have attacked rail lines around the world and it is up to the federal government to take the lead in making certain that hazardous rail cargo is secure. Rail security has been my top security concern and I welcome today's news that the Department of Homeland Security will begin requiring freight railroads and chemical makers to cooperate with the government in formulating rail security strategies.

"It is also crucial that the new Congress act immediately to pass my comprehensive rail security legislation, which includes increased funding for security technology and police officers on both freight and passenger rail lines."

*A summary of Congressman Castle's Rail Security bill is copied below.

Rail Security and Public Awareness Act Congressman Michael N. Castle

• Authorizes \$100 million in grants for mandatory rail worker security-training programs to prepare front-line employees for potential threat conditions. Rail employees interact with riders and are aptly placed to identify suspicious passengers and items. This legislation would teach employees to recognize threatening conditions and to respond to events once they occur.

• Authorizes \$400 million in grants for more police and security officers, canine units, communications systems, and surveillance technology. Providing more funding for security personnel and technology and increasing their visibility can make our railways safer for travelers and deter those who would do us harm.

• Requires the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop strategy for increasing and promoting public awareness campaigns to encourage riders to alert train staff if they observe suspicious behavior. "If You See Something, Say Something" campaign, and "Is That Your Bag?" announcements should be replicated and expanded on national level.

• Requires the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to come up with a timeline for developing a comprehensive national rail security policy that is enforceable and capable of accurately assessing a rail system's vulnerabilities. TSA has missed deadlines and skirted their responsibility for protecting passenger rail. TSA needs to work with other federal agencies and industry stakeholders in coordinating a clear strategy for identifying risks and securing our railways.

• Requires DHS to study the cost and feasibility of implementing several rail security practices that have proven effective for foreign rail operators such as covert testing of security personnel, information clearinghouses, the integration of security into infrastructure design, and random passenger and baggage screenings.

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