

## Castle and Holt Lead Effort to Significantly Boost Rail Security Funding -- March 7, 2007

Washington D.C. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle, co-chair of the Passenger Rail Caucus and New Jersey Rep. Rush Holt, along with a bipartisan group of House Members have organized a letter to key Members of the Appropriations Committee and Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, urging them to provide a significant increase in funding for the intercity passenger rail, freight rail, and transit security grant program in the Fiscal Year 2008 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill.

The text of the letter is copied below.

The Honorable David R. Obey

The Honorable Jerry Lewis

Chairman

Ranking Member

Committee on Appropriations

Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable David Price

The Honorable Harold Rogers

Chairman

Ranking Member

Homeland Security Subcommittee

Homeland Security Subcommittee

Committee on Appropriations

Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Obey, Ranking Member Lewis, Chairman Price and Ranking Member Rogers:

As you work on the Fiscal Year 2008 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, we urge you to provide a robust increase in funding for the intercity passenger rail, freight rail, and transit security grant program in the Office of Grants and Training, State and Local Programs.

Following the terrible events of September 11, 2001, our nation took unprecedented steps to secure our nation's airlines. Congress has continued to provide the needed level of funding to ensure that our nation's airlines are some of the safest in the world. We strongly support this important funding. However, transit security grant programs remain badly underfunded given both the volume of riders carried each day and the known terrorist threat to such passengers.

For example, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) estimates that since 9/11, our government has invested \$7.53 in aviation security improvements per passenger boarding, but only \$0.008 (less than one penny) in public transportation security improvements per passenger boarding.

Every weekday, more than 14 million people use public transportation, and more than 25 million passengers ride Amtrak each year. Yet, we still have far more to do to protect rail and transit travelers from terrorist attacks. And the threat is real.

Since 2004, terrorist cells have conducted successful and deadly bombings on major passenger rail systems in Spain (2004), the United Kingdom (2005), and India (2006), with 450 people killed and 2800 wounded. We know al Qaeda and like-minded groups desire to repeat such attacks here in America.

The Congress took a positive step last year when it raised rail and transit security funding from \$150 million to \$175 million. However, if we are to prevent the tragedies that occurred in Madrid, London, and Mumbai from being repeated in America, we must act now to ensure that our local transit providers have the resources they need to protect the millions of Americans who rely on rail service. In 2004, the APTA outlined \$6 billion in needs for transit agency security-related investments. A 2002 Government Accountability Office study of just eight transit systems that had completed security assessments found that needed upgrades would cost at least \$700 million.

Regrettably, the President's FY2008 budget request for rail and transit security provides no increase in funding over last year's levels. We believe that additional funding is urgently needed to meet this ongoing threat to our public transportation systems. Accordingly, we ask that you provide a robust increase in funding for the intercity passenger rail, freight rail, and transit security grant program in the Office of Grants and Training, State and Local Programs.

We look forward to working with you on these important issues. Please feel free to contact us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Mike Castle

Rush Holt

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Rep. Christopher Shays

Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky

Rep. Frank A. LoBiondo

Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney

Rep. Todd R. Platts

Rep. Tom Lantos

Rep. Doris Matsui

Rep. Bob Filner

Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee

Rep. Tammy Baldwin

Rep. Alcee Hastings

Rep. Jim Saxton

Rep. Richard E. Neal

Rep. Tim Bishop

Rep. Jim McGovern

Rep. Diana DeGette

Rep. Earl Blumenauer

Rep. Vito Fossella

Rep. Frank Pallone

Rep. Ellen Tauscher

Rep. Robert Wexler

Rep. Julia Carson