

## Castle Joins Launch of High Speed Rail Initiative in North East Corridor-- December 15, 2008

Joins Mayor Bloomberg, Sec. Peters to Announce Competition for High Speed Rail Proposals

New York, NY &ndash; The U.S. Department of Transportation has taken the next step in bringing true high-speed passenger rail to the United States today, for the first time requesting proposals for the design, finance, construction, operation and maintenance of high-speed service between New York and Washington, DC and 10 other corridors around the country.

Delaware Congressman Mike Castle (R-DE) joined with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, U.S. Rep. John L. Mica (R-FL), the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Republican Leader, and New York Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) at New York's Penn Station for the announcement. Rep. Castle, as co-chair of the House of Representatives' Passenger Rail Caucus, has worked ensure funding for Amtrak and helped author the recent rail law requiring proposals to expand high-speed service on the North East Corridor. &ldquo;This year, Amtrak carried nearly 11 million passengers on its Northeast Corridor system,&rdquo; said Rep. Castle. &ldquo;As I see it, 11 million fewer travelers are on our roadways, intersections and toll lanes-- preventing further congestion and pollution. Expanding high speed rail and commuter options is essential to the broader way we should be looking at American transportation and energy use. I am hopeful that this initiative will improve our infrastructure, spur job creation, and generate long-term economic growth.&rdquo;

&ldquo;Americans need new ways of travelling between major cities, and a properly structured intercity passenger rail system can and must play a larger role in our nation's transportation future,&rdquo; said Secretary Peters.

&ldquo;If the U.S. is to remain economically competitive with our economic competitors, we must develop high-speed transportation service for our great cities, just as they have for theirs,&rdquo; said Mayor Bloomberg. &ldquo;The high-speed train serving the Northeast Corridor that the federal government is seeking proposals for today is the kind of far-sighted project that we need, and completely consistent with New York City's own transportation goals. It would relieve our congested roadways and airports &ndash; problems that Secretary Peters and I have long worked on together &ndash; and greatly increase our economic productivity. It would reduce our production of deadly pollutants and the greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming &ndash; the primary focus of our city's PlaNYC sustainability agenda, and it would be a major shot in the arm for development of the next generation of transportation technology.&rdquo; &ldquo;This is the most exciting development in U.S. passenger rail in years,&rdquo; Mica said. &ldquo;High-speed rail is an efficient, effective and environmentally friendly method of transportation, and a much-needed alternative to our congested highways and airspace. &ldquo;High-speed rail is a proven success in nations across Europe and Asia. Even countries such as Iran and Vietnam are developing high-speed rail systems for their people, yet the United States lacks a single true high-speed rail route. It's time to move forward into the 21st century of transportation and revolutionize the way in which we move people in this nation,&rdquo; Mica continued. &ldquo;In the United States, our fastest rail systems pale in comparison to the high speed rail systems in use in Europe and Asia,&rdquo; said Rep. Maloney. &ldquo;It's time for us to start catching up with the rest of the world by offering Americans a fast, convenient, and environmentally-friendly alternative to energy-wasting cars and airplanes.&rdquo; The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 was signed into law on October 16, 2008, and provides a framework for DOT to move the high-speed initiative forward. DOT's action today invites anyone from the public or private sector to submit a proposal to develop high-speed service in 11 federally-designated corridors, including two-hour door-to-door service in the heavily congested Northeast Corridor between Washington, DC and New York City. The Northeast Corridor is one of the most valuable yet underutilized assets in the nation. Proposals must be submitted to DOT by September 2009, and DOT must then establish commissions of stakeholders &ndash; including governors, mayors, labor, Amtrak, and freight and commuter railroads &ndash; to evaluate the proposals for each corridor. By April 2010, DOT must evaluate the Commissions' recommendations and submit its own recommendations to Congress, beginning with proposals for the Washington, DC-to-New York corridor. Finally, Congress must take the necessary action to commence work on any selected proposals. # # #