

## (June 14, 2006) Floor Statement on Amendment for Railroad Safety and Improvement Grants

Congressman Daniel Lipinski

June 14, 2006

Floor Statement on the Lipinski, Duncan, Millender-McDonald, Shimkus, Fossella Amendment for Railroad Safety and Improvement Grants to appropriate an additional \$30 million to the Capital Grants for Rail Line Relocation and Improvement Program.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this amendment to provide \$30 million in funding for the Rail and Relocation and Improvement Grant program. With severe budget constraints, I know hard choices had to be made, and I appreciate the leadership of Chairman Knollenberg and Ranking Member OLVER on this bill. However, as a Member who represents the rail hub of the country in Chicago, I understand the critical need to fund rail improvements to communities across the country. Rail is a vital mode of transportation, providing numerous public benefits, including efficient freight shipment, fuel conservation, pollution reduction, traffic congestion relief and economic development. Recognizing that we need to invest in our railroads, Congress authorized \$350 million for the rail line improvement program in last year's SAFETEA-LU transportation bill. Unfortunately, the administration proposed zero funding. We are asking for \$30 million.

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This money would be vital in funding projects that will not only help economic development and create jobs but also alleviate adverse effects of rail traffic on our communities. This includes enhancing safety and motor vehicle flow at road crossings and improving the quality of life in surrounding communities, including quiet zones. All types of rail lines across the country will be eligible for this funding.

This amendment has broad bipartisan support, including the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Duncan), the gentleman from New York (Mr. Fossella), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Shimkus), the gentlewoman from California (Ms. Millender-McDonald) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. Corrine Brown), who have all joined me as cosponsors of this amendment. I urge my colleagues to join me in their support.