

(September 25, 2008) REP. LIPINSKI HAILS PASSAGE OF LANDMARK BILL TO HELP FUND METRA AND AMTRAK

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[Washington, DC] Today Congressman Dan Lipinski (IL-3), northern Illinois' only member of the powerful House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, helped pass H.R. 2095, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. The landmark legislation is the first major update to federal laws on rail safety and Amtrak for over a decade. It includes a number of new grant programs requested by Congressman Lipinski that could benefit Illinois.

"The tragic commuter train crash in Los Angeles on September 12 which claimed the lives of 25 people highlights the need for the federal government to do more to improve safety, fight congestion, and invest in our rail system," said Lipinski. "We must invest in tracks, grade separations, and technology, and this legislation takes significant steps forward in helping our country meet those needs."

H.R. 2095 provides \$1.575 billion for federal rail safety programs and the Federal Railroad Administration over five years. It also authorizes a total of \$13.06 billion for intercity passenger rail service over five years. Specifically, the legislation includes new programs that could significantly enhance Illinois' rail system by improving safety and efficiency -

- Railroad Safety Technology Grants - \$250 million over five years for a new program that would help fund safety projects, such as collision avoidance and other positive train control projects. Congressman Lipinski included similar language in the bill during in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
- High Speed Rail Grants - \$1.5 billion over five years for grants to states or Amtrak to fund the design/engineering and construction of designated high speed rail corridors, including the Chicago High Speed Rail Hub.
- Congestion Grants - \$325 million over five years for capacity enhancement projects in congested passenger rail corridors. Congressman Lipinski included language in the House Committee report that helps designate funds for Illinois projects, including the Heritage Corridor between Chicago and Joliet.

"We have countless Metra, Amtrak, and freight trains running around and through my congressional district," said Lipinski. "As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I'm pleased that my efforts have resulted in new programs that will invest funds into our region, improve safety, and improve rail service.

"H.R. 2095 and the congestion grants will help improve service along the Heritage Corridor," continued Lipinski. "The Railroad Safety Technology Grants will help Metra in my congressional district and across the region. It will help Amtrak. It will help the freight railroads. But most importantly, it will help millions of commuters in Chicagoland who deal with the congestion that is choking our region. With \$1.5 billion for high speed rail, it will also help position us for the future by getting the Chicago High Speed Rail Hub off the ground. We shouldn't have to look towards Japan or China or Europe for high speed rail. We should have it right here in Chicagoland."

The U.S. House of Representatives approved H.R. 2095 by voice vote, and it will now be considered by the U.S. Senate.