



June 5, 2009

Docket Management Facility
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Federal Railroad Administration Docket Number 2009-0045

Dear Docket Clerk:

On behalf of the almost 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I write to provide comment on the Notice concerning Capital Assistance for High Speed Rail Corridors and Intercity Passenger Rail Service: Public Input on Recovery Act Guidance to Applicants, published May 19, 2009, at 74 FR 23466.

About APTA

APTA is a non-profit international trade association of almost 1,500 public and private member organizations, including transit systems; planning, design, construction and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; and state associations and departments of transportation. More than ninety percent of Americans who use public transportation are served by APTA member transit systems.

General Comment

In developing criteria to guide FRA's evaluation of grant applications, we believe eligibility should be established by reference to the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 and the premises explained in FRA's strategic plan Vision for High-Speed Rail in America. FRA actions should be guided by a national plan and map, augmenting the existing national passenger rail system and providing the guiding light for an ongoing program national in scope. We believe each of the three tracks established in the plan should be funded to establish an orderly 'pipeline' of projects as we build to the future and that the full range of passenger system speeds defined in the plan remain eligible to allow for full, equitable competition. Recipients should be limited to public entities while private entities should be encouraged to enter into public-private partnerships that leverage federal funding without encumbering local budgets in difficult economic conditions.

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In evaluating proposals, FRA should look to the overall benefits offered by projects, including those benefits in shared corridors that multiply the public benefits of the program.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to assist FRA in the development of this critical program and stand ready to provide information, research, or other assistance. For additional information, please contact James LaRusch of APTA's executive office at (202) 496-4808 or jlarsch@apta.com.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Millar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "W".

William Millar
President

WM/rk