Reps. Slaughter, Arcuri, Lee, Maffei, and Tonko today announced the approval of $4,595,000 in federal funding that will be used to help improve track and set the stage for the creation of a high-speed rail line between Buffalo and Albany with stops in Rochester, Syracuse, and Utica.

The funds will be used to improve grade crossing safety and to facilitate high-speed rail along the Empire West Corridor. Work will include reconfiguration to enhance safety, including improvements to existing warning devices and the installation of channelization devices. These projects will enable improved speeds throughout the corridor, thereby reducing travel times and increasing on-time service.

**"The development of a high-speed rail line in Upstate New York will not only address our lack of transportation options but create good jobs and boost economic activity across the region,"** said Rep. Slaughter. **"These keys funds mark a down payment on our push to bring high-speed rail to Upstate New York. I am proud to join with my colleagues in this endeavor."**

**"These funds put us on the right track toward achieving high-speed rail across Upstate New York,"** Rep. Arcuri said. **"Today's announcement is a perfect example of the success Upstate New York can enjoy when we work together – Republicans and Democrats – to put economic and infrastructure development for our region above all else. I'm proud of the work we've done on high-speed rail so far, and look forward continuing the fight for Upstate New York in the future."**

The funds were approved by a House Transportation Subcommittee as part of the Fiscal Year 2010 Transportation-Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. It is anticipated that the funds will be approved by the full House Appropriations Committee on Friday and the House of Representatives shortly thereafter.

Congressman Lee said, **"High-speed rail presents a great opportunity for advancing the long-term economic development of Western New York, and this is certainly a good first**

**step in ensuring this project gets off the ground quickly and efficiently. Thanks to our delegation's bipartisan efforts, New York's high speed rail plan is getting the attention it deserves."**

Congressman Maffei said, **"Bringing high-speed rail to Upstate New York would be the 21st century equivalent of the Erie Canal. This step is critical to making that dream a reality. I want to thank the rest of the Upstate delegation for their tireless advocacy to secure funding for this project. We will benefit directly from $1 million secured for my district in this legislation, and I will continue to fight for high-tech jobs, economic development, and better transportation for my constituents."**

The development of an Upstate New York high-speed rail line is a foremost priority of the Upstate New York Caucus, founded by Rep. Slaughter in January 2009 and joined by all the Members of the House representing Upstate districts.

**"These funds will improve the speed, safety and reliability of our current system and lay the groundwork for high-speed rail, which brings the promise of economic revitalization to the towns and cities of Upstate New York,"** said Rep. Paul Tonko. **"Providing an efficient transportation option for commuters and businesses will help lead us toward a cleaner, greener, future and I look forward to working with my colleagues to make high-speed rail a reality for New York."**

The development of an Upstate New York high-speed rail line calls for the construction of an additional track along existing rail lines between Buffalo and Albany on which trains could reach speeds of 110mph and eventually 150mph. The New York State Department of Transportation has estimated that a high-speed rail line between Buffalo and Albany can be constructed within three to five years at a cost of $3 to $5 billion.

In addition to the funds announced today, key members of the Upstate Congressional delegation are pursuing funding allotted to high-speed rail in the recently enacted economic recovery package as well as in additional upcoming federal spending bills.

In the Fiscal Year 2010 appropriations bill Rep. Slaughter secured $1,245,000, Rep. Arcuri secured $1,000,000, Rep. Lee secured $750,000, Rep. Maffei secured $1,000,000, and Rep.

Tonko secured $600,000 for a total of $4,595,000.

**BACKGROUND ON THE BENEFITS OF HIGH-SPEED RAIL**

The development of a new high-speed rail line in Upstate New York offers many potential benefits.

With improved service reliability, frequency, and reduced travel time, it is anticipated that a new high-speed rail line would create new ridership markets directly benefiting Upstate New York's universities, technical centers, tourist destinations, and economy.

Importantly, it will improve the Empire Corridor business climate, including a reduction in business-related costs and increased attractiveness of Upstate urban regions for business development.

Lastly, rail improvements have potential energy and air quality benefits over car and air travel. A new high-speed rail route will reduce the volume of interstate highway traffic by millions of trips annually, helping to alleviate congestion and improve air quality. What's more, millions of gallons of gasoline would be saved annually.