

As many of you know, bringing high speed rail to Upstate New York is one of my highest priorities. Accessibility to the Upstate region is vital to building a new economy in the information age. With a fast, efficient and reliable network of high speed rail, residents, businesses and tourists will be connected to international hubs such as Toronto, Chicago and New York City- improving access to the talented and skilled labor force of our region, generating new tourism opportunities for those who visit, and revitalizing a local transportation network that has been too dependent upon vehicles fueled by foreign oil.

I've long led the campaign for high speed rail in Upstate New York. As a founding member of the Upstate New York Congressional Caucus, I've had the opportunity to oversee the ongoing work to build a high speed rail network. We are continuing to make great progress. In October alone, we:

- Secured the funding to begin the planning and design of a new intermodal rail station in Niagara Falls. The new station will connect the region's existing transportation network with high speed rail.
- Completed the demolition of two existing Amtrak-owned building at the Albany/Rensselaer Station. This is an important first step in reconfiguring the Albany/Rensselaer Station and is vital to preparing the region west of Albany for future high speed rail.
- Secured over \$50 million in additional federal funding for high speed rail projects throughout Upstate New York

Now we have an opportunity to speed up our efforts even more. As many of you know, in Ohio and Wisconsin, the incoming Republican governors have announced that they will not accept federal funding for the development of high speed rail in their states. Their logic is incredibly flawed. They have rejected money that would create much-needed jobs in the construction industry, while building desperately-needed green transportation networks in their regions.

Unlike these leaders, I embrace the opportunity to grow Upstate New York. Earlier this week, I [spoke with U.S. Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary John Porcari](#), and told him that New York State would like to receive as much of the rejected high-speed rail funding as possible. This money is an especially great opportunity. It was passed as part of the federal stimulus package passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in

2009. As such, it has already been allocated by the federal government, and redirecting the funds to New York will not add to the federal deficit.

As Christopher Smith noted in a blog entry on [WNYMedia](#) , following my conversation with Deputy Secretary Porcari, a [Facebook](#) [ok movement](#) has begun, with many upstate New Yorkers also speaking out in support of high speed rail in our state. I am flattered and energized by the voices of my constituents and residents of Upstate New York calling for high speed rail. I share their knowledge that high speed rail is exactly the kind of investment we need to make in our state and for our economy.

It will take effort on both my part and yours to make high speed rail a reality in New York. On Wednesday, I attended a high speed rail public forum at Monroe Community College and was encouraged by the many voices calling for continued development of high speed rail. If you haven't already done so, you can continue to show your support by joining the Facebook movement, and [tell Secretary LaHood](#) we want high speed rail in our state. Alternatively, you can email Secretary LaHood at [Ray.LaHood@dot.gov](mailto:Ray.LaHood@dot.gov) . Now more than ever, your voice is needed to help create the jobs, and build the foundation, of a revitalized economy in Upstate New York.

*This blog entry can originally be found at [The Albany Project](#).*