

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) announced a major step forward for high-speed rail following a meeting between public and private rail interests who were joined by state and federal officials in a renewed effort to bring about progress in building high-speed rail in New York.

Following a meeting with Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, in which he pledged his support for the New York project, Slaughter said she was confident that the rail initiative was moving full steam ahead.

"This is exactly what we need on this project," Slaughter said. "The Secretary said that he was assigning one of his top deputies to focus on New York and I am thankful for all the help Secretary LaHood has given us. Today he told me he was 1000% behind New York because he understands, like I do, what a major economic benefit this will be to the people and businesses across the state. I am pleased that convening this meeting and bringing all the parties together."

"I promised Congresswoman Slaughter that FRA Deputy Administrator Karen Rae will work with the state and do whatever it takes to make high-speed rail happen for New York," LaHood said following the meeting.

Federal officials said that Karen Rae, who is the Federal Railroad Administration's Deputy Administrator, would assume a larger role in the project. Until last year Rae was Deputy Commissioner Policy & Planning at New York's Department of Transportation. Besides meeting with LaHood and Rae, Slaughter spoke with Deputy Secretary John Porcari, FRA Administrator Joe Szabo, along with officials from CSX and the New York Department of Transportation. The meeting took place at the Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C.

"When I formed the Upstate Congressional Caucus last year, we made bringing high-speed rail to the Empire Corridor our first priority," said Slaughter. "Together we secured \$4.6 million in funding through the appropriations process and today is one more milestone. High-speed rail in

New York will be a reality.”

In February, New York State learned it would receive \$151 million in funding from the Recovery Act to begin building a dedicated third track to passenger rail that would stretch from Buffalo to Albany.

The improvement of existing tracks and the creation of a third track dedicated to passenger rail will allow people to move efficiently back and forth across the upstate region, improve commerce, generate new tourism opportunities and spark revitalization in our region for years to come.