

"This is the latest in the majority's agenda that can best be described as penny wise and pound foolish"

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Co-Chair of the Bicameral High-Speed & Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus and New York's leading high-speed rail advocate, today led a chorus of House members aiming to protect high-speed rail funds arguing that putting thousands of jobs at stake is an act of foolishness.

Slaughter today led a two-hour parade of members who spoke on the House floor defending the high-speed and intercity passenger rail program and advocating strongly against misguided cuts to unobligated federal funding awarded in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

At risk with House passage of the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill is high-speed rail funding for 168 congressional districts, 76 of which are currently held by Republicans. Many of the House members speaking tonight are members of the bipartisan [Bicameral High-Speed & Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus](#) which Slaughter founded with 7 Co-Chairs from across the country on [March 14](#)

"I'm opposed to the misguided cuts to high-speed and intercity passenger rail funding in this bill. It will eliminate thousands of jobs, halt a large number of rail projects across the country, hurt local and station economies, and a time when we are way behind every other nation, industrial nations anyway," said Slaughter. "This is the latest in the majority's agenda that can best be described as penny wise and pound foolish. In their Pledge to America, the majority made a promise to the American people, 'we will fight efforts to use a national crisis for political gain' they declared. Sadly that's what they're doing today. Using the tragedy of the national disasters in America's heartland as a political tool to try to eliminate a job creation program, one of the very few we have, is just wrong. Thousands of jobs, millions of dollars in economic investment are at stake and yet this fight brought to us today is little more than an unnecessary ideological battle."

Slaughter's remarks are included below.

[Video of her statement is available here](#) .

To date, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has obligated 73 percent or \$5.85 billion of projects funded by ARRA. And much of this funding, approximately \$1.6 billion of the remaining \$2.15 billion, was only announced in May.

[A list of the projects and estimated number of jobs cut to all 168 affected districts can be downloaded here.](#)

In New York:

New York stands to lose approximately \$450 million if the funds are rescinded. A full breakdown of the implications for New York is included below by congressional district.

SLAUGHTER, LOUISE (D-NY-28)

With the passage of the H.R. 2354, the Fiscal Year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, Representative Slaughter would lose \$59,515,410 intended for two HSIPR projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This rescission would result in the loss of as many as 1,656 jobs. The projects that would be halted are, "Empire Corridor West – Phase 1 3rd Track Mileposts 382-393" and "Rochester Station and Track Improvements."

REED, TOM (R-NY-29)

With the passage of the H.R. 2354, the Fiscal Year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, Representative Reed would lose \$58,115,410 intended for one HSIPR project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This rescission would result in the loss of as many as 1,617 jobs. The project that would be halted is, "Empire Corridor West – Phase 1 3rd Track Mileposts 382-393."

HOCHUL, KATHY (D-NY-26)

With the passage of the H.R. 2354, the Fiscal Year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, Representative Hochul would lose \$58,115,410 intended for one HSIPR project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This rescission would result in the loss of as many as 1,617 jobs. The project that would be halted is, "Empire Corridor West – Phase 1 3rd Track Mileposts 382-393."

TONKO, PAUL (D-NY-21)

With the passage of the H.R. 2354, the Fiscal Year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, Representative Tonko would lose \$151,781,756 intended for three HSIPR projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This rescission would result in the loss of as many as 4,223 jobs. The projects that would be halted are, "Empire Corridor Capacity Improvements", "Empire Corridor South: Albany to Schenectady 2nd Track" and "Empire Corridor South: Grade Crossing Improvements."

GIBSON, CHRIS (R-NY-20)

With the passage of the H.R. 2354, the Fiscal Year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, Representative Gibson would lose \$60,581,756 intended for two HSIPR projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This rescission would result in the loss of as many as 1,686 jobs. The projects that would be halted are, "Empire Corridor Capacity Improvements" and "Empire Corridor South: Grade Crossing Improvements."

MALONEY, CAROLYN (D-NY-14)

With the passage of the H.R. 2354, the Fiscal Year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, Representative Maloney would lose \$294,781,579 intended for one HSIPR project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This rescission would result in

the loss of as many as 8,202 jobs. The project that would be halted is, "NEC Harold Interlocking Amtrak Bypass Routes."

NADLER, JERROLD (D-NY-08)

With the passage of the H.R. 2354, the Fiscal Year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, Representative Nadler would lose \$449,944,000 intended for one HSIPR project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This rescission would result in the loss of as many as 12,519 jobs. The project that would be halted is, "NEC Power, Signal, Track, Catenary Improvements."

CROWLEY, JOSEPH (D-NY-07)

With the passage of the H.R. 2354, the Fiscal Year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, Representative Crowley would lose \$294,781,579 intended for one HSIPR project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This rescission would result in the loss of as many as 8,202 jobs. The project that would be halted is, "NEC Harold Interlocking Amtrak Bypass Routes."

Slaughter's Remarks

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I'm opposed to the misguided cuts to high speed rail funding in this bill. It will eliminate thousands of jobs, will halt a large number of rail projects across the country and we are way behind every other nation, industrial nations anyway, and hurt local and station economies. This is the latest in the majority's agenda that can best be described as penny wise and pound foolish.

In their Pledge to America, the majority made a promise to the American people, "we will fight efforts to use a national crisis for political gain" they declared. Sadly that's what they're doing today. Using the tragedy of the national disasters in America's heartland as a political tool to try to eliminate a job creation program, one of the very few we have, is just wrong. Thousands of jobs, millions of dollars in economic investment are at stake and yet this fight brought to us today is little more than an unnecessary ideological battle.

The high speed and intercity passenger rail program is critical to our country's competitiveness. It puts Americans back to work, it revitalizes our construction and manufacturing sectors, boosts the domestic economy and helps in U.S. dependence on foreign oil. It is both unwise and infective to cut important funding for one project in order to pay for disaster relief. We are a nation that should be able to both build for the future, in fact we must, and provide for our fellow citizens in need today.

High speed rail creates jobs. And every billion dollars in high speed rail and intercity passenger rail construction funding supports 24,000 jobs. High speed rail creates short-term jobs in construction, long-term jobs in ongoing maintenance and operation and direct jobs by providing regions with access to a larger labor pool and driving economic development. In my home state

of New York, the United States Conference of Mayors estimates at least 21,000 new jobs and \$1.1 billion in new wages with the construction of high speed rail along the Empire Corridor from Buffalo to Albany.

High speed rail also creates the economic corridors in the future. A high speed rail line in Western New York is currently planned, it would reduce the travel time significantly and expand the Western New York labor market to 955,562 workers, would make in the 26th largest metro area in the world and that means new businesses will be drawn and then we plan to connect to the cities of Montreal, Toronto and to the rest of the eastern seaboard and for the first time in many years we may even be able to go West.

In New York high speed rail will be our next Erie Canal. Nationally it is being compared to the national highway system. Both spurred local development, brought millions of jobs to the country and the nation and at this point in time we must not let this opportunity slip away. What's more, rescinding funds for high speed rail now after \$5.68 billion have already been obligated by the Federal Railway Administration will negate the unprecedented work already being done by the FRA and its partners. FRA, the states', Amtrak and infrastructure owning railroads, made significant progress in reaching service outcome agreements to ensure that intended project benefits are realized while protecting the public's investment and the railroad's operating interest.

The attempt to rescind this money is nothing but an opportunistic attempt to gain politically from a human tragedy. The flooding that has occurred in our nation's heartland is being used as an excuse to eliminate an investment in our transportation network and our future. This is morally reprehensible and economically irresponsible. If we're to be a competitive global economy in the years to come we must dedicate ourselves to building the infrastructure that we will need to compete. To rescind these funds now -- after so much progress has been made -- and at a time when investments in our own infrastructure and our country are so sorely needed, is quite simply an act of foolishness. I yield back the balance of my time.

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