

March 3, 2009 - Rep. Slaughter Leads High-Speed Rail Meeting with Transportation Secretary LaHood

For Immediate
Release

Tuesday, March 03, 2009

Rep. Slaughter Leads
High-Speed Rail Meeting with Transportation Secretary LaHood and Upstate New York Caucus

Washington, DC - Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chair and founder of the bipartisan Upstate New York Caucus, today led a meeting between Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and the Caucus to discuss on-going efforts to bring high-speed rail service to Upstate New York.

"All of us who represent Upstate New

York know that right now we need to attract people back to the area, create good jobs and strengthen the regional economy," said Rep. Slaughter. "Bringing high-speed rail to Upstate New York will do just that."

The Caucus

intends to pursue an initiative allowing for high-speed rail service to reach speeds of 110 mph and eventually 150 mph. This will require the purchase of a new right of way and the construction of a third track along existing rail lines between Buffalo and Albany. The Caucus discussed this initiative as well as how to best work with Secretary LaHood to secure a portion of the \$8 billion allocated to high-speed rail in the recently enacted economic recovery bill.

"I'm proud to have brought all the key players to the table to ensure that we can bring high-speed rail to Upstate New York quickly and with a strong base of support," Slaughter concluded.

On Tuesday, February 24, 2009 Rep. Slaughter brought members of the Upstate New York Caucus, and representatives from Governor David Paterson's office, the New York Department of Transportation, the Federal Railroad Association, Amtrak, and CSX together to work on bringing high-speed rail to Upstate New York.

The group must work in collaboration with CSX, who owns the existing tracks and the current right of way, to reach a win-win agreement where all parties will benefit from the construction of the third track.

BACKGROUND

Upstate New York Caucus

In January, Congresswoman Slaughter formed the new, bi-partisan Upstate New York Caucus which was promptly joined by all the members of Congress representing Upstate. The purpose of the Caucus is to address issues facing Upstate New York and collectively work to revive the regional economy and create good-paying jobs.

The members of the bi-partisan Upstate New York Caucus include Rep. Michael Arcuri, Rep. John Hall, Rep. Brian Higgins, Rep. Maurice Hinchey, Rep. Chris Lee, Rep. John McHugh, Rep. Daniel Maffei, Rep. Eric Massa, Rep. Louise Slaughter, and Rep. Paul Tonko.

High-Speed Rail

On Thursday, February 26, 2009, President Obama released his fiscal year 2010 budget to Congress which included a proposal for a five-year, \$5 billion high-speed rail state grant program. The Caucus is determined to work together to secure grants annually over the next five years.

Additionally, the Caucus will work with James Oberstar, Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to achieve this goal, and Congressional Appropriators to secure funding in fiscal year 2010 federal spending bills.

###