

March 25, 2009 - Rep. Slaughter Discusses "Third Track Initiative" With CEO of CSX

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Slaughter Met With CSX CEO Michael Ward Today

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, today met with Michael Ward, Chief Executive Officer of CSX Transportation, regarding the "third track initiative" to develop a high-speed rail line between Buffalo and Albany with stops in Rochester, Syracuse, and Utica.

The "third track initiative" 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. In order to move forward with the project, the right of way to these tracks will need to be purchased. Currently, CSX owns the right of way.

"It's unacceptable that Upstate New Yorkers don't have good transportation options to travel the area or visit our state's

capital," Slaughter said. "The development of high-speed rail in Upstate New York is a top priority because it will not only address this region's woeful lack of transportation options but also create good-paying jobs."

The purpose of today's meeting was to secure a commitment from Mr. Ward to negotiate with the New York State and to appoint a high level employee with the authority to make decisions.

"I support the improvement and expansion of both freight and passenger rail and look forward to working with CSX to reach a win-win agreement to bring high-speed rail to Upstate New York," Slaughter continued. "Anything we can do to boost economic activity is a good thing for our region."

BACKGROUND

In January, Rep. 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 first initiative of the Caucus is to bring high-speed rail to Upstate New York.

Over the past several weeks, Rep. Slaughter has led meetings with the key players needed to bring this endeavor to fruition expediently: the Upstate New York Caucus, the New York State Department of Transportation, Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Amtrak and CSX.

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.

The Upstate Caucus has committed to pursue funding allotted to high-speed rail in the recently enacted economic recovery package as well as in upcoming federal spending bills.

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