

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 15, 2011

The Honorable Ray LaHood
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

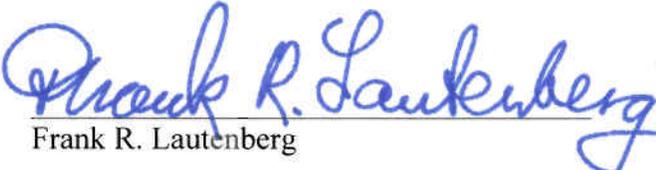
We are writing to urge you to move expeditiously to release the \$450 million in high-speed intercity passenger rail funding recently committed to the Northeast Corridor (NEC). We were pleased by the announcement of this funding in May and look forward to the critical benefits this investment will soon provide to Amtrak and NJ Transit riders in our home state.

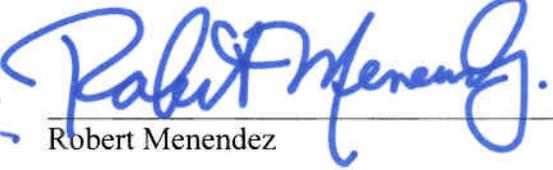
As you know, the Northeast Corridor—and particularly the area slated for \$450 million of improvements in New Jersey—is an ideal recipient of the high-speed rail grants rejected by Florida. Each weekday alone, the commuter ridership on the NEC averages more than 722,000 people and Amtrak service along the NEC provides the equivalent of 243 flights and 30,000 cars.

The Amtrak Northeast Corridor project that will receive this funding will provide vital upgrades to our nation's only high-speed rail line. This \$450 million will be used to reduce delays, increase speeds, improve service, and prevent power failures in New Jersey. The benefits to New Jersey commuters and families will be significant.

Amtrak is prepared to move forward immediately, and we therefore ask that you obligate this funding without undue delay. Your commitment to improving infrastructure and expanding access to transportation jobs in New Jersey has been crucial, and we look forward to continuing our work together in the future.

Sincerely,


Frank R. Lautenberg


Robert Menendez