

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 20, 2011

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

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We write in strong support of Amtrak's application for funding for the Gateway Project from the Federal Railroad Administration's March 2011 Notice of Funding Availability for High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail projects. The Gateway Project is critical for the future growth and expansion of the entire Northeast Corridor, and will benefit the economy and passengers both in New Jersey and throughout the region.

Amtrak has said that the Gateway Project is the "cornerstone" from which it plans to build the next generation high-speed rail system, improving speeds on the Northeast Corridor to 220 miles per hour. Accordingly, Amtrak has applied for \$570 million for the replacement of the more than 100-year-old Portal Bridge. Replacing the Portal Bridge would improve system reliability, reduce delays and congestion, and boost economic development in the region, while also creating 6,000 construction jobs over the life of the project.

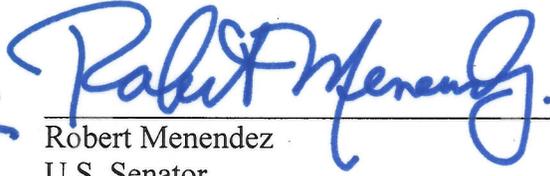
Amtrak has also applied for \$188 million for preliminary engineering and environmental analysis for the Gateway Project. The project would lay the groundwork for higher speed rail service and greatly increase passenger rail capacity into Manhattan, including the building of a new tunnel under the Hudson River. The existing, 100-year old rail tunnel into midtown Manhattan is the only commuter rail crossing into midtown, and it is operating at capacity during rush hour. More than 250 million rail passengers currently travel the Corridor annually and this total is expected to increase sixty percent by 2030. To meet this demand, Amtrak expects that the Gateway Project will increase capacity for NJ Transit trains from the current 20 to 33 and allow Amtrak to operate eight additional peak-time intercity trains per hour into New York.

Investing in the Gateway Project is essential to the continued growth of New Jersey and the vitality of the region. Without increased capacity the traffic and congestion into midtown Manhattan will be a chokepoint for New Jersey's economic success. High-speed rail funding for projects on the Northeast Corridor are a solid investment with a proven history of success and economic development. We encourage you to grant Amtrak's application for the Gateway Project.

Sincerely,



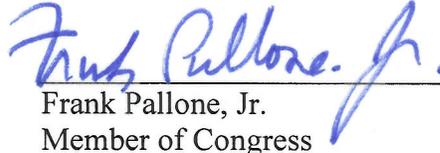
Frank R. Lautenberg
U.S. Senator



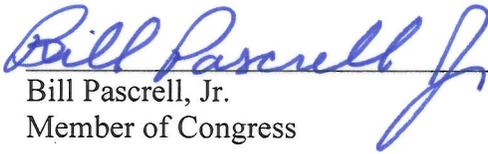
Robert Menendez
U.S. Senator



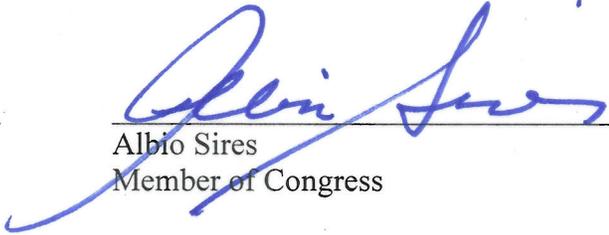
Steven R. Rothman
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



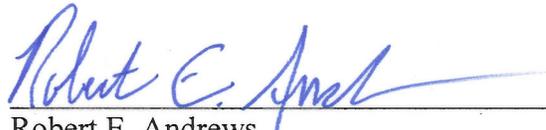
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress



Robert E. Andrews
Member of Congress