

The Honorable John Kerry  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2008

Dear Senator Kerry,

The undersigned organizations write to express support for the *High Speed Rail for America Act*, an important first step toward creating a modern and reliable high-speed rail network in the United States. In an era of soaring fuel prices, overburdened airports and highways, and a sluggish economy, we join you in your call for decisive change and a new vision for the way people get around in our country.

Americans are searching for alternatives to high prices at the pump and the headaches of air travel. They are turning to rail and transit in record numbers. Rail travel ridership increased each of the last five years, while last year the total vehicle miles traveled for cars and trucks fell for the first time since the oil crisis of the 1970s. Now more than ever, we need federal investment to meet these trends and prepare us for the future. That means much more and faster rail travel nationwide.

High-speed rail would provide clean, safe, reliable and efficient travel between America's population centers. Long-term federal investment in rail would also create tens of thousands of quality jobs in states that have experienced losses in the technology, construction, and engineering sectors over the last decade.

This legislation provides two necessary components for the establishment of a world class high speed rail system in America: dedicated funding and federal coordination. Over six years, the bill provides \$200 million a year in grants, \$8 billion in tax exempt bonds, \$10 billion in tax credit bonds for high-speed intercity rail facilities, and \$5.4 billion in tax credit bonds for rail infrastructure. The bill also establishes a national office of high-speed rail to serve as a central communication and planning hub to ensure that the mission stays on track.

We applaud your leadership on this issue. Decades ago, America completed the interstate highway system. Now, we face congestion on our highways and in our skies, an addiction to oil, and an overheating planet. We need legislation like the *High Speed Rail for America Act* to provide Americans a better way to go.

Sincerely,

The American Planning Association  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Friends of the Earth  
National Association of Rail Passengers  
Reconnecting America  
Smart Growth America  
Construction Management Association  
of America

Environment America  
Environment and Energy Study Institute  
Midwest High Speed Rail Association  
National Resources Defense Council  
Sierra Club  
US Public Interest Research Group

