



July 30, 2009

IAM Urges Rail Investment That Includes Rail Jobs

IAM and IAM-TCU representatives attended a Capitol Hill meeting about U.S. investment in High Speed Rail. The roundtable was hosted by the Chair of the House Rail Subcommittee, Congresswoman Corrine Brown (D-FL) and included the Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Congressman Jim Oberstar (DFL-MN), members of Congress, rail union officials and industry representatives. John Porcari, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Transportation and Karen Rae, Deputy Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration also attended.

“When it comes to passenger rail, the United States lags far behind the rest of the industrialized world,” said Roach. “The U.S. has spent just over \$10 billion on passenger rail since 1993. France and Germany each spent more than that in 2003 alone.”

The only high speed rail available in the United States is Amtrak’s Acela, which travels between Washington, D.C. and Boston. In theory, the Acela is capable of achieving speeds of 150 mph, but Amtrak averages only 83 mph between Washington and New York, and 66 mph between New York and Boston due to congestion and inadequate infrastructure. There is \$8 billion currently available for rail development, with President Barack Obama’s budget requesting another \$5 billion over the next five years.

The Machinists Union opposes any exceptions to the Buy America provisions of the American Recovery and Investment Act, which states that “all of the iron, steel and manufactured goods used in the project are produced in the United States.”

“U.S. workers should build the parts, assemble the trains and maintain all elements of a new high speed rail system,” said Roach. “We have all the skills and resources necessary to build a world-class passenger rail system. Since American taxpayers are funding the project, their investment should be spent putting Americans to work.”

The IAM and its Transportation Communications Union (TCU) affiliate represent more than 60,000 U.S. railroad workers.