

## U.S. DOT Awards \$30 Million to 15 State Intercity Rail Projects

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced last week a first-of-its-kind release of \$30 million in federal funding to states for the development of intercity passenger rail.

"As Americans continue a historic cutback in driving and turn to other forms of transportation like rail and transit, a new approach to funding intercity passenger rail projects will lead to improved service and better on-time performance across the country," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, who announced the grants during a news conference with Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine at the Amtrak station in Richmond.

As part of a new plan to improve intercity passenger rail service nationwide, Peters said the department is providing \$30 million to match local investments in 15 rail-capacity-enhancement projects across the country. These federal/state partnerships will support projects designed to reduce delays and expand capacity on existing intercity passenger rail routes and help establish new services where none exist today.

Until now, she said, there has been no way for states to qualify for federal funds to match local investments in rail capacity as all federal funds have gone directly to Amtrak.

"In every region of the country, states are leading the way in developing intercity passenger rail corridors," said New York Transportation Commissioner Astrid Glynn, chair of AASHTO's Standing Committee on Rail Transportation. "These state investments in the intercity passenger rail network are succeeding and, with the announcement of federal support for this state commitment, we look forward to continuing to advance intercity passenger rail as an increasingly viable public transportation mode."

U.S. DOT had received \$120 million in funding requests for 25 projects. It only had the money to fund one quarter of the need, leaving 10 applicants with no grants.

"It is important to note that we asked Congress for \$100 million for this project, but they provided only \$30 million," said DOT spokesman Brian Turmail.

The 15 grant recipients are:

Arizona: Environmental Impact Statement for Tucson to Phoenix, \$1 million

California: San Joaquin Corridor 4.5-mile double tracking, \$5 million

Illinois: Installation of centralized traffic control and cab signals from Joliet to Mazonia, \$1.55 million

Illinois: Installation of cab signal technology from Mazonia to Ridgeley, \$1.85 million

Maine: Portland-area track improvements, \$500,000

Minnesota: Preliminary Environmental Impact Statement for Twin Cities to Duluth high-speed rail, \$1.1 million

Missouri: Siding extension, St. Louis to Kansas City, \$3.3 million New York: Albany Station track and signal improvements, \$1.25 million

Ohio: Cleveland-Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati planning and Alternatives Analysis, \$62,500

Vermont: Vermonter Route 1-mile rail replacement/bridge redeckings, \$450,000

Vermont: Ethan Allen Route 2-mile track reconstruction, \$581,775

Virginia: Third track south of Fredericksburg, \$2 million Washington State: Point Defiance bypass, \$6 million

Wisconsin: Chicago-Milwaukee welded rail (17.85 miles), \$5 million

Wisconsin: Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Alternatives Analysis and planning, \$297,000