



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

High Speed Rail New York Coalition Announced

MALCOLM A. SMITH January 7, 2010

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Senate President Malcolm A. Smith and Senator David J. Valesky Join Upstate Leaders to Announce High Speed Rail New York Coalition

High Speed Rail Will Create Jobs, Reduce Carbon Footprint and Allow for Increased Connectivity for Business, Urban and Tourism Development

(Syracuse, NY)-Senate President Malcolm A. Smith and Senator David J. Valesky were in Syracuse this morning with members of Congress and other elected officials to introduce the new High Speed Rail Coalition and announce the submission for over \$5 billion in federal funding.

Senators Smith and Valesky were joined by Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Congressman Dan Maffei, Congressman Michael Arcuri, Assemblyman Sam Hoyt, Assemblyman William Magnarelli, Matt Driscoll, Mayor of Syracuse, Frank Kobliski, Executive Director Central New York Regional Transportation Authority and Darlene Kerr, President of the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce to unveil the Coalition's High Speed Rail Regional Impact findings.

The Impact studies have found that High Speed Rail for the Empire Corridor would create approximately 250,000 immediate jobs during the construction phase and another 1.7 million jobs upon completion as labor markets are bolstered in the Rochester-Syracuse areas and Buffalo-Niagara Falls area.

The study revealed that High Speed Rail would reduce the carbon footprint and decrease traffic congestion. Carbon emissions per passenger mile traveled are much lower for those commuting via passenger rail compared to automobile or airline. One gallon of diesel fuel will move one ton of goods or people over 450 miles.

Economic, urban and tourism development would be bolstered by making travel easier and more efficient for New Yorkers to travel to work, attend university and visit tourist attractions in all of New York's major metropolitan areas.

The High Speed Rail New York Coalition is comprised of mayors, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations from major metropolitan areas across Upstate New York. It represents over 13,000 businesses that employ in excess of one million Upstate workers. The Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce and the Metropolitan Development Association of Central New York partner to manage this coalition.

Federal funding for New York to support high-speed rail (HSR) for the Empire Corridor (New York City-Buffalo) and the Northeast Corridor (Washington, DC-Boston) is available under the Obama Administration HSR initiatives in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the reauthorization of the federal transportation program, Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA).

In April, President Obama released a strategic plan outlining his vision for high-speed rail, identifying \$13 billion in federal funds, (\$8 billion in the Recovery Act and \$5 billion requested in the President's budget), to jump start a potential world class passenger rail system that would set the direction of rail policy for the future.

The High Speed Rail Coalition will be conducting educational outreach seminars in each of the major metropolitan Upstate cities to work with businesses and citizens to realize and capitalize on the numerous benefits that High Speed Rail can have on their region.

“High speed rail can be the economic engine that drives New York toward a 21st century economy,” said Senate President Pro Tempore Malcolm A. Smith. “Sound investment in high speed rail, supported by a strong federal partnership, will create the modern infrastructure and transportation system New York needs to compete in the global economic market and get our economy back to work.”

“High speed rail in Upstate New York has the potential to revolutionize the entire region's economy, much like the construction of the Erie Canal did more than a century ago,” Senator Valesky said. “I support the Coalition's efforts and look forward to working with its members, along with our Congressional delegation, to bring high-speed rail to Upstate.”

“The ability to travel quickly and efficiently will help stimulate regional economies and reconnect communities nationwide. New York must play an integral role in seeing that the development of high speed rail projects across the country as well as throughout New York move forward,” said Senator Martin Malavé Dilan, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee. “We must begin to look to a sustainable transportation system and high speed rail will help get us there.”