

Today, Congressman John W. Olver, Chairman of the Transportation and Housing Appropriations Subcommittee, announced U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded \$70 million for final design and construction of the "Knowledge Corridor" along the Connecticut River rail line in western Massachusetts. The competitive grant award is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail program.

Congressman John Olver, Chairman of the Transportation and Housing Appropriations Subcommittee said, "High-speed rail funding in the stimulus is the most important transportation initiative since the Eisenhower interstate highway system. This project represents a significant investment in the region. Not only will it spur job creation, but it will also provide an alternative transit option for commuters along the densely-populated I-91 corridor."

"This is exceptional news," said Governor Patrick. "The Knowledge Corridor is a cornerstone of our vision for regional rail and regional economic growth. This \$70 million will support long-awaited improvements, create jobs and restore access to cities in the Pioneer Valley. Thanks to wonderful teamwork with our neighboring states and the advocacy of our congressional delegation, especially Congressman Olver, the Obama Administration recognized the project's strong potential, and the powerful impact it will have on our economy. I couldn't be more thrilled or more grateful."

The project, with a total budget of \$75.6 million, will rehabilitate the existing Connecticut River rail line. Once completed, Amtrak Vermonter service will be rerouted to the line providing a more direct route, faster service and restored access to the cities of Northampton and Greenfield. The Vermonter will make stops at the former Amtrak station at Northampton and the new ARRA-funded intermodal transit center in Greenfield. The project will create an estimated 626 jobs during construction and 155 permanent jobs by the 5<sup>th</sup> full year of operation.

MassDOT's Rail & Transit Division will oversee the project construction, which will be done by Pan Am Southern and is expected to take approximately two years and begin during the 2010 construction season.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided \$8 billion in competitive grants to jumpstart high-speed rail development in 100 to 600 mile corridors across America. The U.S.

Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration received 259 applications totaling \$57 billion. Today's announcement funds projects in 13 corridors spanning 31 states.

Congressman John Olver said, "The Obama Administration realizes that high-speed rail is an important component of a modernized transportation system. Without an adequate investment in passenger rail, population growth will create more congested highways and airspace, increased travel delays, and environmental degradation. Not only do these grants provide a down payment on that investment, they will also create thousands of jobs at a time when they are desperately needed."

President Obama continued his commitment to investing in high speed rail by including \$1 billion in his Fiscal Year (FY2010) budget. Congressman Olver's FY2010 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill upped this figure to \$4 billion. The Senate's bill contained \$1.2 billion. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010, which the President signed into law on December 16, 2009, commits \$2.5 billion to high speed rail.

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