

NEWS

OHIO RAIL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

50 W. Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 644-0306 telephone or fax (614) 728-4520
<http://www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Stu Nicholson

614-644-0513

Columbus Supports Ohio Hub Plan *City Council Approves Resolution*

(Columbus) -- Columbus City Council members unanimously approved a resolution of support Monday evening for advancing Ohio's statewide passenger and freight rail plan into the important environmental impact study phase. With this action, Columbus joins 22 cities and other organizations in this growing show of support.

Sponsored by City Council member Maryellen O'Shaughnessy, the amendment calls upon the Governor and Ohio's delegation to the United States Congress to support funding that would advance the ***Ohio Hub Plan*** into the critical Environmental Impact Study (EIS). Completion of the EIS would positively position Ohio once a federal rail infrastructure funding program is passed and enacted by Congress.

"With a new Gubernatorial administration in Ohio and a new Congress in Washington taking office in January, we feel very optimistic about taking the Ohio Hub Plan to the next level", says Matt Dietrich, Interim Executive Director for the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC). In thanking the Council for its support, Dietrich told them there is legislation currently before Congress that could provide the funding program necessary to eventually get a system of high speed passenger trains running in Ohio and throughout the Great Lakes Region.

Senate Bill 1516 was recently reintroduced in the Senate by its chief sponsor, Senator Trent Lott of Mississippi and has strong bi-partisan support. Among the

features of the bill is a provision that would create a funding source for state-generated rail plans like the Ohio Hub. Currently, Ohio is one of 28 states currently planning or implementing such plans, but all are limited by the lack of the kind of federal funding support that has historically underwritten the building of highways and aviation systems.

If you'd like more information on the Ohio Hub Plan, visit our new website at www.ohiohub.com

(The Ohio Rail Development Commission is an independent agency operating within the Ohio Department of Transportation. ORDC is responsible for economic development through the improvement and expansion of passenger and freight rail service, railroad grade crossing safety and rail travel & tourism issues. For more information about what ORDC does for Ohio, visit our website at <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/>)