March 3, 2015

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader Pelosi, Chairman Shuster and Representative DeFazio:

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) would like to thank the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for its expeditious work to reauthorize the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015 (H.R. 749) and would urge the House to pass the bill in the same timely manner. We believe it is in our nation’s interest to provide our rail system with the same financial security as other modes of transportation such as our highways, transit, aviation and waterways. As such, NCSL strongly supports a dedicated source of federal funding for passenger rail service, including adequate support for a capital improvement program.

As the U.S. House of Representatives debates H.R. 749, NCSL would urge the chamber to recognize how integral intercity passenger rail systems have been to alleviating congestion and environmental concerns in the nation. Additionally, we believe that the reforms approved by the committee in Sec. 203 that require greater data sharing of service costs and ridership forecasts, amongst other information, from the national passenger rail system to states provides a foundation for states to meet their expanded role in high-speed and intercity passenger rail. Federal support for these efforts is imperative.

Moving forward, NCSL welcomes the opportunity to further discuss federal funding of Amtrak and other passenger rail systems across the nation.
Please contact Ben Husch (202-624-7779 and ben.husch@ncsl.org) or Melanie Condon (202-624-3597 and melanie.condon@ncsl.org) for any additional information.

Sincerely,

Senator Deb Peters
South Dakota Senate
Co-Chair, NCSL’s Standing Committees

Representative Mary Jane Wallner
New Hampshire House of Representatives
Co-Chair, NCSL’s Standing Committees

Attached: NCSL’s Our Nation’s Rail System Policy Directive