

WASHINGTON, D.C. --- Today, members of the House Railroads Subcommittee, including Chairman Jack Quinn (R-NY), Ranking Member Bob Clement (D-TN) and Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), will hold a press conference at the House Triangle to respond to the President's plan to privatize Amtrak. Secretary of Transportation, Norman Y. Mineta, announced earlier this morning the Administration's plan for the nation's passenger rail system that will require states to pay an increasing share of costs, create public-private partnerships for some lines and contract-out jobs now held by rail union workers.

This announcement came just as Amtrak is trying to secure a \$200 million loan to maintain service this summer. The Secretary's announcement was silent on Amtrak's most immediate needs and failed to address the federal loan requested by the railroad.

Additionally, the Secretary announced that the administration will oppose any authorization for Amtrak funding larger than its \$521 million proposal. This \$521 million proposal is the same level of funding as last year, but significantly below Amtrak's \$955 million authorization for fiscal year 2002. Amtrak has testified that without an appropriation of \$1.2 billion, it will need to cut service. An increase in funding will help Amtrak make badly needed infrastructure improvements and cover operating expenses for long-distance service.