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EDUCATION AND LABOR  
COMMITTEE ON  
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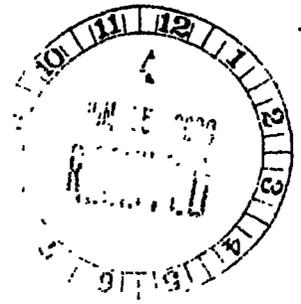


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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 9, 2009

The Honorable Anne K. Quinlan  
Acting Secretary  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E St. SW  
Washington, DC 20423-0001



Re: Allegheny Valley Railroad Company Petition for Declaratory Order  
STB Finance Docket No. 35239

Dear Acting Secretary Quinlan:

I write to voice my continuing support for the use of the Allegheny Valley Railroad Company right of way for commuter rail service into downtown Pittsburgh, specifically for the petition that Allegheny Valley Railroad Company has filed for Declaratory Order with the Surface Transportation Board to clarify the status of a rail easement located between 16<sup>th</sup> Street and 21<sup>st</sup> Street in Pittsburgh, PA. The Allegheny Valley Railroad Company has advised the Board that this railroad easement would provide a crucial downtown Pittsburgh terminus for passenger rail service currently being evaluated between New Kensington and Pittsburgh, PA.

I have long supported this important project. In 2007, in conjunction with the Westmoreland County Transit Authority, we were able to obtain \$500,000 to study the feasibility of restoring commuter rail service on this rail line. From the onset of this project, Allegheny Valley Railroad Company has expressed its willingness to cooperate in making its railroad right of way available for this much needed commuter rail project.

Recently, further studies have determined that the New Kensington to Pittsburgh line will attract over 1,900 passengers per day, sufficient ridership to make commuter rail service feasible. With rising gas prices and increasing congestion along State Route 28, it is clear that we need to direct more resources towards developing commuter rail service in western Pennsylvania. In order to accelerate this project, we are currently focusing on establishing a "starter system" that will provide passenger rail service between New Kensington and downtown Pittsburgh along the Allegheny Valley Railroad Company right of way. While the details of this proposal are currently being evaluated, this is one of the top priority transportation projects in my district. As we move forward, it will be necessary to consider buying or leasing rail cars; creating a maintenance facility; and,

most importantly, establishing park-and-ride lots and stations at various locations along the line and particularly at the terminus of the line in the Strip District in downtown Pittsburgh.

Accordingly, I urge the Board to give thoughtful consideration to the relief sought by Allegheny Valley Railroad Company in its Petition for Declaratory Order so that we will have the option to evaluate all available alternatives in the planning and development of commuter rail service between New Kensington and Downtown Pittsburgh.

Sincerely,

  
The Honorable Jason Altmire  
Member of Congress