AMTRAK SAYS TRANSPORTATION MUST BE THE CENTERPIECE OF ANY PLAN TO TRANSFORM NORTHEAST CORRIDOR
NEC is not just a piece of real estate

WASHINGTON – Amtrak President and CEO Joseph Boardman issued the following statement today regarding proposed legislation by House Transportation Committee Chairman John Mica and House Railroad Subcommittee Chairman Bill Shuster on privatizing the Northeast Corridor and the Amtrak national network:

“Any plan for transforming the Northeast Corridor (NEC) must make transportation the centerpiece of the effort. The NEC is not just a piece of real estate – it is a major transportation artery and a vital component of the regional economy carrying more than 250,000 intercity and commuter passengers every day.

“The Mica/Shuster proposal takes Amtrak apart only to put something in its place that looks quite similar. I hope to have a serious and constructive discussion about how rail operations in the Northeast should be managed, but it appears this bill will be rushed through committee next week.

“We should have our eyes open to the possibility of innovations that can improve the NEC and Amtrak provides the region the best opportunity to achieve the needed improvements. The NEC is a success under Amtrak stewardship and many components of our next-generation high-speed rail vision plan are already moving forward.

“We’re going to have to take a careful look at the proposal because we don’t want to run the risk of adopting something that won’t work, that compromises safety, or that simply costs more than we can afford.

“We have a basic duty to the public to ensure that we’re looking after their interests, and the last thing the Northeast needs is a plan that’s poorly thought through and that doesn’t take key issues into account.”

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About Amtrak®:
Celebrating 40 years of dedicated service as America’s Railroad®, Amtrak is the nation’s intercity passenger rail provider and its only high-speed rail operator. A record 28.7 million passengers traveled on Amtrak in FY 2010 on more than 300 daily trains – at speeds up to 150 mph (241 kph) – that connect 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces. Amtrak operates trains in partnership with 15 states and four commuter rail agencies. Amtrak also is a strong financial performer achieving an 85 percent cost-recovery ratio in FY 2010. Enjoy the journey® at Amtrak.com or call 800-USA-RAIL for schedules, fares and more information. Join us on facebook.com/Amtrak and follow us at twitter.com/Amtrak.

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