July 10, 2008

Dear Attendee:

I write this letter in support of the regional rail initiatives New Hampshire has begun to undertake, including the New Hampshire Capitol Corridor project. This project represents the vital first step in connecting New Hampshire to its regional partners in creating a vibrant transportation network.

Transportation forms a critical part not only of our physical infrastructure, but of our economic infrastructure as well. The costs of transportation impacts households and communities and the amount of money they have to spend on other parts of the economy. As the cost of gasoline continues to rise, people have less money to spend on the things they need to survive and on discretionary items that make local economies survive.

Passenger rail fits into a broad picture of transportation and economic stability and in my home state of Maine as the Amtrak Downeaster has proven that high-quality rail service is a catalyst for economic development. The Downeaster has paid enormous dividends for the state and will continue to do so in the future. A recent study concluded that development projects along the Downeaster corridor will generate $3.3B in construction investment and create more than 8,000 new jobs in Maine over the next 22 years. This will lead to the contribution of more than $55M in new state tax revenues annually.

Rebuilding the region’s rail infrastructure will not be the only answer to supporting the New England’s diverse. Countless studies have shown that young professionals are leaving New England more and more. Many of those who leave do so unwillingly; not because they don’t love the opportunities New England has to offer, but because they cannot afford to live here. Rails and roads, trains and buses must work together to be part of solution to retaining and attracting dynamic employers, but also dynamic employees who can access all areas of the region.

With the creation of the New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority and Gov. John Lynch’s recent signing of the rail liability cap bill, the New Hampshire stands on the threshold of creating a dynamic transportation network by reintroducing passenger rail the transportation mix. The New Hampshire Capitol Corridor project is an essential project for the state and region to get behind. It will be equally as important for New Hampshire to work with and support its neighbors to gain the support and resources it needs to make the project successful. More importantly, the successful start and completion of the project will show the rest of New England that New Hampshire is ready and able to develop additional transportation connections with its neighbors.

The Downeaster has been tremendously successful in helping commuters to access Boston, New England’s economic hub. Creating additional transportation connections to Boston and new connections to New Hampshire’s economic engine, the Manchester-Boston Airport, and its communities will allow the state and region to remain economically viable in these economically
challenging times. And as the Downeaster did for Maine, the New Hampshire Capitol Corridor will do for the region in helping its businesses and residents thrive economically.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

The Honorable George J. Mitchell
Former United States Senator