



A bold voice for transportation workers

September 21, 2011

Oppose Efforts to Repeal Rail and Over-the-Road Bus Security Grant Programs

Dear Senator:

As the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee marks-up the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Authorization Act of 2011, I urge you to oppose efforts by Senator Coburn to eliminate railroad and over-the-road bus transportation security grant programs. The funds distributed under these grant programs provide critical resources that enhance the security of freight and intercity passenger rail carriers and private bus operators and help protect passengers, workers and the public.

Freight and intercity passenger rail and private bus operators are key components of the U.S. transportation network and play a critical role in the economic health of our country. In 2010, freight rail transported 2 billion tons of goods across the country. Over the last several years Amtrak has experienced record ridership growth and roughly 19 million passengers are carried daily by some 76,000 buses nationwide. At a time when federal homeland security and intelligence authorities continue to warn of terrorist threats directed at our transportation system, it would be irresponsible to slash federal resources designed to mitigate such threats.

While there is no way to guard against all security threats in the entire transportation system, strategic investments such as those made possible by the DHS security grant programs help make us safer. The railroad and over-the-road bus security assistance grant programs provide critically needed funds that can be used to train personnel, including frontline employees, in security awareness, preparedness and response. In addition, grant monies may be used for infrastructure improvements to enhance security at railroad stations and bus terminals. These funds support the installation of improved lighting, fencing, cameras and video surveillance equipment, among other security measures. It would be virtually impossible to implement these types of security upgrades without federal assistance.

We do not need to be reminded that our transportation system continues to be a focal point for terrorists. In May of this year, government intelligence revealed that terrorists were plotting an attack on U.S. railroads to coincide with the 10th anniversary of September 11th. Now is not the time for Congress to eliminate security grant programs that will support efforts to protect against and respond to terrorist threats.

On behalf of transportation labor, I urge you to oppose language offered by Senator Coburn that would repeal the railroad and over-the-road bus federal security assistance grant programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', written over a white background.

Edward Wytkind
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

888 16th Street NW / Suite 650 / Washington DC 20006

Tel:202.628.9262 / Fax:202.628.0391 / www.ttd.org

Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer

