

Metropolitan Planning Council

May 25, 2012

Senator Martin Sandoval
118 Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Representative Dan Burke
233-E Stratton Office Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Senator Sandoval and Representative Burke:

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) supports Senate Bill 2861 which would create an escrow account for the purposes of funding inter-city passenger rail maintenance. Specifically, funds in the escrow account could only be withdrawn pursuant to an annually updated high-speed rail line maintenance plan.

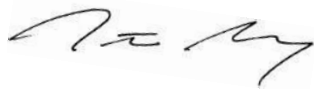
Too often, governments invest only in the present, making needed capital infrastructure investments without taking into account the long-term maintenance costs. As a result, twenty years down the road we're left with crumbling infrastructure and no money to rebuild it. As Illinois moves forward on the construction of high-speed rail, a highly capital intensive project, transportation leaders must plan for future maintenance costs so as not to squander the upfront investment.

Illinois has decided that high-speed rail is a worthwhile investment, a choice MPC applauds. Illinois economic recovery depends on wise investments in our transportation network. Aside from the benefits of the higher speed passenger rail service, enhanced stations will spur new economic and community development, triggering private investment, revitalizing business, diversifying the local tax base, and creating jobs.

Job number one is to maintain our infrastructure. SB 2861 represents a smart plan to address life-cycle costs and ongoing maintenance of high-speed rail, ensuring the original capital investment continues to attract riders and grow the economy.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,



Peter Skosey
Vice President

cc: Speaker Madigan
President Cullerton
Leader Cross
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Tim Mapes

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