

TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON
15TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1315

April 17, 2003

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Mr. Anthony J. Belscamper, Legislative Representative
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Division 602
P.O. Box 1008
Mahomet, IL 61853

Dear Mr. Belscamper:

Thank you for contacting me to outline the importance of intercity passenger rail for downstate Illinois communities. An efficient multi-modal transportation system is pivotal to our economy and our livelihoods, and rail is an important part of this. Now more than ever it is apparent that this is an integrated system, and no one mode of transportation is sufficient on its own. This was demonstrated in the days following September 11, 2001, as stoppages in the aviation system were accommodated by highway, rail, and transit systems.

Amtrak President David Gunn made it clear to Congress that a \$1.2 billion appropriation for Amtrak in FY03 was necessary to keep all lines running. An appropriation significantly less than that would force the closure of several long distance lines, and possibly even the entire operation. Though the FY03 omnibus appropriations bill originally contained less than half that request, heavy pressure from many of my colleagues and I succeeded in convincing the conferees to include \$1.05 billion for Amtrak, as well as a \$105 million loan repayment extension. Though long-term funding issues must still be addressed, budget shortfalls in the short term have been remedied, and local communities can be confident that students and other commuters will not be left stranded.

Thank you again for your comments and the information you have provided. If you have any further concerns, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Tim Johnson
Member of Congress

TVJ/rdl