

# ***NEWS***

## ***OHIO RAIL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***Ohio Senate Passes Ohio Hub Resolution Asks U.S. Congress to Approve Funding For Environmental Impact Study of High-Speed Passenger /& Freight Rail Plan***

**(Columbus)** – By a vote of **33 to 0**, the Ohio Senate today voiced emphatic support for advancing the plan to bring high speed passenger service and greatly expanded capacity to move more freight by rail. The resolution asks Ohio’s delegation in the U.S. Congress to support a request by the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) for \$2.5 million dollars to move the Ohio Hub Plan into the critical Environmental Impact Study (EIS) phase.

Even before the vote, well over 20 Ohio Senators had signed on as co-sponsors to the resolution, whose chief sponsor was Sen. Kirk Schuring (R-Canton).

“Few things send a stronger message to Ohio’s members of Congress than when their counterparts in the Ohio Statehouse say with one voice that a project like the Ohio Hub is important to our state’s economy, our ability to create jobs and improve our quality of life,” says ORDC Executive Director Jim Seney. “The Ohio Senate not only has my thanks at this show of support, but deserves the thanks of all Ohioans for today’s vote.”

The ORDC funding request is scheduled to be considered Friday by the U.S. House Appropriations Committee as part of the overall FY-07 transportation request by Members of Congress. Three Ohioans sit on that committee, Congressman David Hobson (R-7th District), Congressman Ralph Regula (R-16th District) and Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (D-9<sup>th</sup> District).

If it becomes part of the House Appropriations transportation request, the legislation would then go to the U.S. Senate where it would also go through the Committee process, possibly a House-Senate Conference Committee and consideration by the full Senate.

ORDC's request for \$2.5-million would be for one year, allowing the EIS process to begin. If the request is approved, work on the EIS could begin early next year. It would require a second funding request to complete the EIS phase.

It is during the Environmental Impact Study that ORDC can begin to identify and solidify such elements of the Ohio Hub Plan as the actual route system, station locations, frequency of train service and, most importantly, the infrastructure needs to build the Hub system: bridges, new track, utilities, right-of-way preservation, etc.

"Today's vote doesn't mean we'll have passenger trains running tomorrow", says ORDC's Seney, but it does mean that Ohio legislators strongly believe that there should be a 'tomorrow' where all Ohioans will have the choice of riding the train for business or pleasure."

***(The Ohio Rail Development Commission is an independent agency operating within the Ohio Department of Transportation. ORDC is responsible for economic development through the improvement and expansion of passenger and freight rail service, railroad grade crossing safety and rail travel & tourism issues. For more information about what ORDC does for Ohio, visit our website at <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/> )***

