Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph C. Szabo Prepared Remarks Transportation Research Board's High-Speed Rail Workshop Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C. January 13, 2013

Thank you, Rod, for that great introduction – and good morning, everyone. It is my honor to be here today with Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

It was not that long ago when passenger rail was America's forgotten mode. But Mr. Secretary, your strong support for rail has helped spark real change.

Now, the nation's first 220 MPH high-speed rail system is set to break ground this year; 110 MPH service has not only come to the Midwest, it's expanding; and all told, 152 rail development projects are moving forward.

And none of this fast progress would be possible without the vision and commitment of President Obama and Vice President Biden – or without your tremendous leadership.

With the Secretary's strong support, the FRA has been able to work with our 32 state partners to tailor service to the distinct needs of each market.

And with our grant agreements, we've been able to work very deliberately with states and host freight railroads to make sure our investments aid our entire rail network in growing to meet future demand.

I'd also like to acknowledge Rod Diridon and the Mineta Transportation Institute.

Thank you for your hard work in organizing this event, and for making sure that highspeed and higher-performing intercity passenger rail is among the important issues being discussed at this prestigious conference.

The need to continue investing in rail is clear.

By 2050, America's transportation network will need to move more than 100 million additional people and four billion more annual tons of freight. But today, our highways and airports are stretched to their limits – faced with congestion that will only grow with time.

The cost of this congestion has grown 500 percent in just 30 years – it now costs our economy close to \$130 billion annually.

And in the face of these challenges, we know the efficiencies of rail simply cannot be ignored.

With services targeted to the market, rail can be the most cost-effective, least oil reliant, and most environmentally friendly mode to move both people and freight.

We also can't ignore the fact that Americans' travel habits are evolving.

It has been said that America has too much of a car culture to embrace trains.

But, over the last eight years, Americans have actually driven less, while using passenger rail and public transit in record numbers.

And it's important to understand that these patterns are shifting fastest among young people – who in an eight-year period starting in 2001 reduced their average vehicle miles traveled by 23 percent and increased their average miles traveled by rail and buses by a whopping 40 percent.

Amtrak has set ridership records in nine of the last 10 years, with ridership growing close to 50 percent since 2000. And according to a national survey conducted by the American Public Transportation Association, nearly two-thirds of Americans – and close to three quarters of young people – say they are likely to travel by high-speed rail.

This is the future we're preparing for.

And it's my honor now to introduce Secretary Ray LaHood.