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Rail Customers Hail Congressional Action to Fix America's Broken Rail System

Bipartisan Bill Would Make Railroads Play by the Same Rules as Other American Industries

Washington, D.C. (March 6, 2007) – Today a broad coalition working to establish an effective rail system for America heralded bipartisan legislation introduced by Senators Herb Kohl (D-Wis.), Norm Coleman (R-Minn.), Russ Feingold (D-Wis.), David Vitter (R-La.) and Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) that would level the playing field by subjecting railroads to the same rules of competition as other industries and the customers they serve. As introduced, the Railroad Antitrust Enforcement Act of 2007 would promote competition by eliminating the obsolete antitrust exemptions that are contributing to a growing rail crisis threatening America's economy.

"Our nation's rail system is broken; it is not meeting the economic needs of our country," said Glenn English, former U.S. Congressman and Chairman of CURE. "By providing customers with access to rail service options and a venue to challenge market power abuses, as this legislation does, we will be well on our way to establishing a healthy, competitive system for the future."

The nation's antitrust laws are consumers' basic protection against monopoly abuses by providers of essential goods and services. Under the current system, the railroads have no incentive to provide reasonable rates or reliable service. Rail customers are forced to pass on the costs of these rail hikes and delivery delays to consumers or import foreign products, thereby gouging American businesses.

Removing the railroads' anti-trust exemption has wide support. Responding to anti-competitive abuses in their states, eighteen state Attorneys General in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota and Wisconsin, urged the Congress, in a letter to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, "to remove the current railroad antitrust exemptions and subject the nation's major railroads to the basic law that ensures competition in our nation."

ABOUT CURE:

CURE is a coalition of America's rail customers seeking changes in federal law to improve the reliability, effectiveness and affordability of the nation's rail system.

*The group represents public utilities; rural electric co-ops; investor-owned utilities; farmers; chemical, ethanol, agriculture, cement and other manufacturers; forest and paper companies; and all their customers. **For more information visit www.railcure.org***

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