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# RAIL REPORT

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RAIL CUSTOMER NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM C.U.R.E.

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## JULY 2006

### SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE HOLDS CONFIRMATION HEARING ON STB NOMINEE

On Thursday, July 27, the Senate Commerce Committee held a confirmation hearing on the president's nominee to chair the Surface Transportation Board, Charles "Chip" Nottingham. In attendance were Chairman Ted Stevens (R-AK), Ranking Member Daniel Inouye (D-HI), and Senators Trent Lott (R-MS), Conrad Burns (R-MT), George Allen (R-VA), Jim DeMint (R-SC), and Byron Dorgan (D-ND).

#### C.U.R.E. HAS A NEW LOGO!

C.U.R.E. is pleased to unveil its new logo:



#### COSPONSOR UPDATE

C.U.R.E. is pleased to announce the following new cosponsor:

H.R. 2047, The Railroad Competition Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005:

Rep. Jim Nussle [R - IA]

Total Cosponsors of H.R. 2047: 37

Mr. Nottingham said if confirmed, stakeholders should consider him an open-minded and accessible leader. Mr. Nottingham said he is committed to making government more efficient, something he achieved while working in the House of Representatives and while chairing the Virginia Department of Transportation. He added that he is concerned about the time and cost involved in bringing rate cases before the STB, and he has already heard from stakeholders on the importance of solving that problem. If confirmed, he vowed to consider each matter before him on its merits and tackle the issues "head on." A Senate vote on Mr. Nottingham's confirmation is

expected sometime in September.

### RAILROAD INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT INTRODUCED IN SENATE

On Wednesday, July 26, Senator Trent Lott (R-MS) introduced S. 3742, a bill to provide the railroads with a 25 percent investment tax credit for capital infrastructure improvements. Joining Senator Lott as cosponsors are: Senators Kent Conrad (D-ND), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Chuck Hagel (R-NE), Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Ben Nelson (D-NE), and Gordon Smith (R-OR). **Please contact your Senators and urge them to support the ITC legislation only if provisions are added that address rail customer concerns.**

### ADDITIONAL LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEREST TO RAIL CUSTOMERS

Along with the ITC legislation, Congress is considering the following bills that address rail customer concerns:

- *Small Business Administration Reauthorization*: Provides expanded authority to the existing Small Business Ombudsman to bring complaints, either formal or informal, before the STB. *Status*: The bill is awaiting markup by the Senate Small Business Committee.

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- *Senate Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill*: Includes language directing the STB to conduct a hearing on the “bottleneck” decision and to publish final rules for small rate cases. *Status*: The bill has passed the committee and awaits a vote by the full Senate.
- *H.R. 5965, the Program for Real Energy Security Act*: Includes language addressing the need for effective railroad oversight at the STB and reiterates the importance of rail reliability to our nation’s energy security. *Status*: The bill has been referred to committee.

**C.U.R.E. BRIEFS “BLUE DOG” HOUSE DEMOCRATS ON CAPTIVE RAIL ISSUE**

On Wednesday, July 26, C.U.R.E. staff Bob Szabo and Chris Bohanon briefed a group of moderate House Democrats on the captive rail issue. The group, known as the “Blue Dog Democrats,” holds these monthly breakfast briefings on a wide array of issues and C.U.R.E. was pleased to have been invited to lead this session. Twelve Members, their staff and the staff of several additional Members were in attendance, representing congressional districts from all across the country. The briefing was very useful. Some Blue Dogs have already cosponsored captive rail customer legislation; others have cosponsorship under active consideration; and others were learning about the issue for the first time. During the August recess, if your Member of Congress is a Blue Dog Democrat, please follow-up with them on this important issue. Attending the Blue Dog briefing were the following Members: Reps. John Tanner (TN-8), Marion Berry (AR-1), Michael Michaud (ME-2), Mike Ross (AR-4), Leonard Boswell (IA-3), Mike Thompson (CA-1), John Barrow (GA-12), Jim Cooper (TN-5), Lincoln Davis (TN-4), Jim Matheson (UT-2), Jim Costa (CA-20), Dennis Moore (KS-3).

**C.U.R.E. HOLDS FIRST COMMUNICATIONS SUMMIT**

Responding to a need for a united message and an intensive grassroots campaign, C.U.R.E. held its first-ever communications summit for members on Friday, July 28, at the offices of the American Chemistry Council in Arlington, Virginia. Conducted by C.U.R.E.’s media consulting firm, Manning, Selvage & Lee, the summit brought together over 40 representatives of the utility, chemical and other industries to discuss effective communications strategy for the remainder of 2006 and into 2007. Formal presentations were made by Sheila McLean and Chuck Alston of Manning, Selvage and Lee; Brian Rude of Dairyland Power Cooperative; and Bob Szabo of C.U.R.E.

MS&L provided useful tips on formulating a concise message, working with the media, and coordinating successful state-based grassroots campaigns. Of particular interest were presentations from the leaders of Wisconsin’s “Badger C.U.R.E.” and Minnesota’s “Gopher C.U.R.E.,” both of which have been extremely effective in organizing stateside supporters of the captive rail cause. These presenters were able to share with the group what has been accomplished in their states and which actions have been most effective. Finally, the group conducted brainstorming sessions regarding plans of action for grassroots organizations and communications campaigns in additional states.

The summit was tremendously productive. We hope to hold another meeting before the year’s end. Thanks to all who participated and helped organize this important event!

**C.U.R.E. ROLLS OUT NEW LOGO**

After a long and successful tenure, C.U.R.E. has decided to retire its old logo in favor of an updated, refreshed look (see first page of this newsletter). We hope the launch of this new logo will provide additional momentum to our efforts as we approach the end of 2006 and look toward 2007. C.U.R.E. is also in the process of overhauling its website, [www.railcure.org](http://www.railcure.org). Please stay tuned for further developments.

