

For Immediate Release

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**RELEASE OF NATIONAL RAIL PLAN KEY INGREDIENT
TO MOVE COMMUTER AND HIGH-SPEED RAIL FORWARD, SAYS APTA**

Statement by American Public Transportation Association president William Millar

“We commend the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for its release of the Preliminary National Rail Plan unveiled on October 16, 2009. The plan describes the many issues that must be addressed in order for the nation’s rail service to grow.

“What begins as a bold vision must be supported through a comprehensive set of policies supportive of that vision. While major national trends favor an ongoing growth for rail, this will not happen until we address the underlying set of issues that will enable that growth — including right-of-way, regulatory, liability, equipment and investment issues. We must also take steps to assure that our intercity high-speed rail network is well integrated with local rail and bus systems to assure that passengers can rely on seamless travel.

“Rail transportation has inherent safety, environmental and energy efficiency advantages. Growth in the coming years will fuel a new and forward looking set of business opportunities, contributing to green jobs and economic enterprise in America. Of the 25 commuter rail systems in service today, only nine were in operation in 1980. The future will witness continued growth in commuter rail, as the nation creates a new intercity high speed rail system linking our major metropolitan areas.

“The Preliminary National Rail plan is an interim step on the way to a final National Rail Plan, required pursuant to the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. APTA (along with other stakeholder groups) worked closely with FRA in developing the preliminary plan, and such work will continue as a final plan is written.”

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The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is a nonprofit international association of over 1,500 public and private member organizations, including transit systems and high-speed, intercity and commuter rail operators; planning, design, construction, and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; transit associations and state departments of transportation. APTA members serve the public interest by providing safe, efficient and economical transit services and products. More than 90 percent of the people using public transportation in the United States and Canada are served by APTA member systems.