

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 4, 2012

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## GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES HUDSON RAIL LINE LEASE

### Amtrak/CSX Deal Will Improve Passenger Service, Move Projects Forward

ALBANY, N.Y. -- Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced a long-term lease agreement between CSX Corporation and Amtrak, enabling Amtrak to take full control of the Hudson Line between Schenectady and Poughkeepsie. The contract, which took effect at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 1, ensures that passenger rail service has scheduling priority there and paves the way for four significant rail improvement projects totaling \$181 million. The improvements will reduce congestion along the Empire Corridor from New York City to Niagara Falls and improve travel times and reliability for passengers and freight.

“High-speed rail is a critical part of the transportation network of New York State’s future and these four projects made possible by an historic and long-awaited agreement between passenger and freight rail partners are another step toward improving New York State’s economy by fostering a rail system that is fast, reliable and efficient for business and leisure travelers, as well as for companies shipping goods across the state,” Governor Cuomo said. “Communities, especially in upstate New York, rely on rail transportation to bolster local economic activity. Enhancements to rail service will continue to lead to job creation and business growth all over New York State.”

Governor Cuomo has successfully competed for and won scarce federal passenger rail funding over the last several years. In addition to ensuring that the Hudson Line funding can be spent efficiently through this unique lease arrangement, Governor Cuomo has increased the total federal funding captured by NYS by over \$400 million and has leveraged significant state funds to win federal competitions. As of today, NYS is progressing passenger rail projects with federal, state and local funding amounting to over \$942 million.

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The New York State Department of Transportation led the efforts to transform the 94-mile Hudson Line from Schenectady to Poughkeepsie from a freight-controlled line to an Amtrak-controlled line. For decades signals have been designed to freight standards, and all planning and construction was subject to approval and control of the freight railroad. Dispatching of trains will now move from CSX's freight yard at Selkirk to Amtrak's Command and Control Center in New York City. Amtrak also can improve the Hudson Line and take advantage of Federal Railroad Administration funding without the approval of CSX.

"For years I have been working to improve passenger rail service across the Empire Corridor in New York State," said Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, founder and co-chair of the Bicameral Bipartisan Congressional High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus. "This is certainly a wonderful step and I am hopeful that it serves as the beginning for similar agreements that will benefit those of us in other parts of New York State. This agreement will go far toward improving reliability and speed for the thousands of New Yorkers who depend upon rail service for their livelihood and to stay connected to their loved ones. I look forward to working with all of the parties involved as we introduce similar agreements in the Rochester region."

"With this historic agreement, Amtrak and our state partners can now move forward together and begin work on key infrastructure projects to enhance passenger rail travel in New York State," Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman said. "Our goal is to provide a more reliable and enjoyable travel experience for passengers. I would like to thank our state and federal partners for their continued support of rail travel in the region."

New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) Commissioner Joan McDonald said, "These rail projects will upgrade technology, modernize the corridor and enhance the traveler experience by providing faster, more efficient service that users can count on. The agreement between Amtrak and CSX also means the State's high-speed rail system will be eligible for additional federal funding, which we will work with our state and federal partners to aggressively pursue."

"CSX is very pleased that it could work with New York State and Amtrak on this historic agreement that establishes the foundation for even stronger rail connections between

metropolitan and upstate New York. We look forward to working with Amtrak as it takes on responsibility for operations on the Hudson Line between Hoffmans and Poughkeepsie," said Louis Renjel, CSX's vice president-strategic infrastructure. "The agreement also ensures that CSX will have the ability to continue providing efficient, economical and environmentally beneficial freight rail service to customers and communities on the line."

Work already is underway on four significant passenger rail improvement projects being progressed jointly by NYSDOT and Amtrak. \$155.5 million of funding for these projects is being provided by the federal government, including \$147.6 million in funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. \$23.15 million will come from New York State. The four projects are:

- Construction of an additional track between Rensselaer and Schenectady to significantly reduce congestion. Work started this fall on a \$91.2 million project to build 17 miles of new track, doubling capacity between the two cities. With the existing single track, a train must stop and wait for a train running in the opposite direction to pass. A double track will eliminate this critical bottleneck for the entire corridor and improve performance time for all trains between Albany and points west. The project began this season with delivery of materials and culvert work, with track work to begin next year and project completion scheduled for the fall of 2017. The work is fully funded through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- Building a critically important fourth track at the Rensselaer Station to reduce congestion and delays. When the Rensselaer Station was built in 2002, funding was not available to build a fourth track. Trains wait outside the station for as long as 20 minutes for a platform to become available, causing congestion at the station and delays for passengers. This is a \$50.5 million project funded with State and federal dollars. Construction began this season with preparatory culvert work and delivery of materials, including 20,000 railroad ties, 9,000 tons of ballast, 137,000 pounds of railroad spikes, and 1,000 tie plates and anchors. Track installation will begin next year and the entire project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2017.
- Grade crossing improvements along the Empire Corridor South to improve safety for motor vehicles and trains. The railroad runs along the Hudson River where people also live, work and enjoy boating and other pastimes, making it critical that crossings over the rail tracks are safe for vehicles and pedestrians. This \$2.45 million project includes safety improvements at 13 at-grade rail crossings in Columbia, Dutchess and Rensselaer counties. Work includes installing new LED lights, electronic flashers and bells, speed predictors, new gates and constructing other intersection improvements. The first

location at Ferry Road in the town of Stuyvesant, Columbia County, has been completed. Improvements at the remaining 12 locations are to be completed during the next two years. The work is fully funded through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

- Signal line improvements south of Albany to significantly improve the reliability of rail service, particularly during inclement weather. This is a \$36.5 million project to replace more than 60 miles of obsolete signal wires, burying lines that now hang on poles along the rail line and replacing 30-year-old wiring with new underground power cable and electronic track circuits. The signal wires are the source of frequent outages along the Hudson line, especially during inclement weather. Travelers all too often experience the frustration of moving at 15 miles an hour over track capable of supporting 110 mph. Approximately 30 percent of the delays south of Albany during bad weather are caused by signal malfunction or damage. Design is ongoing and work will begin next season. The project is being advanced with State and federal rail funds and is expected to be completed by the end of 2016.

“This is tremendous news for New York rail passengers and will finally allow for millions of federal dollars to be spent on vital rail improvements and the improved reliability that we have long advocated for,” said Senator Schumer. “The second track between Albany and Schenectady has long been considered the “Holy Grail” Upstate rail project, and the new station at Schenectady and 4th track in Rensselaer station will make rail travel much more efficient and enjoyable.”

“I firmly believe in the power of high speed rail to drive economic growth in New York State,” said U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. “Investing in new transportation infrastructure is one of the fastest, most effective ways to create jobs now, and lay the foundation for a growing economy and more jobs in the future. We’ve worked hard to make high speed rail a reality in our state. With these new projects in motion, we can connect more of our major business and research hubs, connect workers and businesses faster, attract new businesses, spark new innovation, and create thousands of new construction jobs right now developing rail lines.”

Representative Paul Tonko said, “This deal between Amtrak and CSX is yet another step in the right direction for passenger rail travel in New York State,” said Congressman Paul Tonko. “As we continue to incrementally pursue and build high speed rail, especially with these

four crucial projects around the Capital Region, travelers will continue to see rail as a viable, competitive alternative to driving. Rail is the most energy efficient form of travel and can help improve our regional marketability and quality of life.”

Travel on Amtrak was the highest in its 41-year history in July 2012. All indications are that the trend will continue, especially since here in New York State investments in passenger rail infrastructure are being prioritized and built for the first time in decades. Albany-Rensselaer is Amtrak’s 5th busiest station in the nation. More than 1.65 million people traveled between Albany and New York City in 2012, up 3 percent from 2011.

**About Amtrak®:**

Amtrak is America’s Railroad®, the nation’s intercity passenger rail service and its high-speed rail operator. A record 31.2 million passengers traveled on Amtrak in FY 2012 on more than 300 daily trains – at speeds up to 150 mph (241 kph) – that connect 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces. Amtrak operates intercity trains in partnership with 15 states and contracts with 13 commuter rail agencies to provide a variety of services. Enjoy the journey® at [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com) or call 800-USA-RAIL for schedules, fares and more information. Join us on [facebook.com/Amtrak](https://facebook.com/Amtrak) and follow us at [twitter.com/Amtrak](https://twitter.com/Amtrak).

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