



Congressman Tim Bishop

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BISHOP VOTES FOR BILL TO KEEP LIRR RIDERS SAFE

Homeland Security bill would authorize \$6 billion to secure national public transit against terrorist attacks

Washington, DC—Today Congressman Tim Bishop (NY-1) applauded the passage of a bill by the U.S. House of Representatives to close the security gaps facing rail and mass transit, including the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR). The Rail and Mass Transit Security Act of 2007 (H.R. 1401) would require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop a national plan for protecting railways, public transportation, and inter-city buses from attacks. In addition, this bill would authorize \$6 billion over four years for grants to protect these transportation systems with training, grants, security planning, research and development, and shipments of sensitive materials.

"Despite the fact that terrorists have repeatedly targeted trains and buses, we are woefully unprepared to deal with that threat," said Bishop, who is a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. "Although we have made improvements to airline safety and port security since 9/11, this bill is the first serious attempt to protect the 11 million Americans who ride mass transit every day. It would give DHS the resources it needs to ensure that LIRR commuters and other riders are safe."

Passenger rail systems in the United States carry about five times more passengers each day than airlines. LIRR carries an average of 282,400 passengers a day. However, as tens of billions of dollars have been allocated for aviation and port security, Congress has only spent about \$660 million to improve mass transit security. For every seven dollars spent to protect an airline passenger since 9/11, just over a penny is spent to protect a mass transit or rail passenger.

At the same time, terrorists have increased attacks on rail and mass transit systems around the world. On March 11, 2004, in Madrid, Spain, ten bombs exploded almost simultaneously, killing 191 people and wounding 1,900. On July 7, 2005, in London, England, bombs killed 52 people and injured approximately 700. According to the RAND Corporation, between 1995 and June 2005, over 250 terrorist attacks against worldwide rail targets resulted in almost 900 deaths and over 6,000 injuries.

"These attacks on mass transit hit close to home for the 282,400 passengers and their families who ride LIRR every day," said Bishop. "It should not take a repeat of the Madrid or London bombings on American soil for the government to take action. This bill would ensure that we are being vigilant against a major threat and vulnerability on the home front."

The new bill would require DHS to develop and implement a plan for rail, bus and public transit systems within six months of enactment. It also would create three new grant programs: \$3.4 billion over four years for public transportation security grants; \$2.4 billion over four years for rail security grants; and \$87 million over four years for bus security grants.

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