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**EDWARD G. RENDELL, Governor**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

April 16, 2009

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**PENNSYLVANIA WELCOMES PRESIDENT OBAMA'S  
ENDORSEMENT OF HIGH SPEED RAIL INVESTMENT**

*PENNDOT SECRETARY BIEHLER PART OF SELECT AUDIENCE TO HEAR PRESIDENT'S RAIL VISION*

**HARRISBURG** – A number of Pennsylvania rail projects could benefit from President Barack Obama's strong endorsement today for additional investment in high speed rail corridors.

"We are already seeing the benefits of the significant rail investments we've made in Pennsylvania," Governor Edward G. Rendell said, noting that improvements to the Keystone Corridor between Harrisburg and Philadelphia boosted ridership by 26 percent.

Transportation Secretary Allen D. Biehler., P.E., was one of five state transportation secretaries in the audience at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in Washington, today when the president reiterated his commitment that the nation should move ahead with a nationwide system of high speed rail lines. The Keystone Corridor in Pennsylvania is on the White House's list of lines that could qualify for such investment.

"Governor Rendell has demonstrated the wisdom of investing in high speed rail," Biehler said. "Under the Governor's leadership, Pennsylvania in 2006 completed a \$145 million improvement project with Amtrak to increase speeds on the Keystone Corridor between Harrisburg and Philadelphia. The resulting sharp increase in ridership demonstrates that by making smart investments, you can make a big difference for the nation's mobility."

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or ARRA, \$8 billion has been set aside for high speed rail projects across the nation.

"We await the specific guidelines to be published by the U.S. Department of Transportation on how this money will be awarded, and we will look for ways to attract those funds to Pennsylvania," Biehler said.

Governor Rendell has directed state agencies to aggressively pursue ARRA competitive grants that

could benefit residents and create jobs. Biehler said PennDOT will explore potential uses of the high speed rail funds including whether studies on additional service between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, additional improvements to the Harrisburg-to-Philadelphia Keystone Corridor and work on a proposed rail line between Scranton and Hoboken, N.J., would qualify for the high speed rail funding.

Former PennDOT deputy secretary Karen Rae, now deputy administrator for the Federal Railroad Administration, briefed the audience prior to the president's remarks.

"What was so gratifying today was to have President Obama offer a forward-looking vision for high speed rail that will provide mobility options for the nation and contribute to a much needed strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions," Biehler said.

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