

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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ROCK ISLAND DISCUSSIONS WITH REAGAN OFFICIALS

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) said today that Kansans interested in preserving service on the old Rock Island line in Kansas are contacting Reagan Administration transportation officials to emphasize the need for federal cooperation in maintaining Kansan rail service.

"In the past several days I have contacted Department of Transportation Secretary-designate Drew Lewis and Deputy Secretary-designate Darrell Trent to make them aware of the problems posed by the Rock Island Railroad's bankruptcy and the unified support of the Kansas delegation for efforts to retain service," said Senator Dole. "In addition, Huck Boyd, head of the Mid States Port Authority attempting to purchase track across northern Kansas, met personally with Mr. Lewis and Mr. Trent on Saturday to pass along these concerns. Senator Kassebaum was instrumental in arranging these meetings and has joined in working with the newly-appointed officials. I am pleased that this continues to be a joint effort.

"We informed Secretary-designate Lewis of our two years of work to preserve rail service on Kansas track and our desire to work with him in completing our efforts. We emphasized the need for federal assistance in retaining service to northern Kansas. The Burlington Northern is presently serving this area on a temporary and voluntary basis, but future service is threatened. The Mid States Port Authority is now attempting to purchase some of this track and lease it to viable railroads interested in operating the track for profit. Two railroads are seriously interested and the plan now looks feasible, but the Port Authority will require low-cost loans from the Federal Railroad Administration, a division of DOT, for the plan to succeed. We emphasized the public need for this service and the appropriateness of the loans," said Dole.

"I am still optimistic that northern rail service can be maintained. The Port Authority has been working diligently to make it happen, and the new Administration will be sensitive to our problems. I am particularly encouraged that Darrell Trent, who was born and raised in Pittsburg, Kansas, will be playing an important role at the new Department of Transportation," Dole concluded.