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Consumers and rail customers praise Klobuchar's leadership on freight rail reform

ST PAUL, Minn. (December 18, 2009) Gopher Consumers United for Rail Equity (CURE) and Cooperative Network praised the leadership role Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) played in the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee's unanimous approval of a historic, reform-oriented Surface Transportation Board Reauthorization Act.

"Action in the U.S. Senate's Commerce Committee to improve the federal railroad regulatory program for rail customers could mean an enormous boost to Minnesota's consumers and it wouldn't have been possible without the leadership of Sen. Amy Klobuchar," said Amy Fredregill, Cooperative Network vice president and chair of Gopher CURE. "As the only U.S. Senator on both the Senate Commerce and Judiciary Committees, Senator Klobuchar has been able to drive real progress on rail reform through increased anti-trust protections to ensure greater competition and oversight reform to provide greater fairness in railroad pricing."

The legislation passed by the Senate Commerce Committee includes many key reforms championed by Senator Klobuchar, and she has successfully fought for commitments to make further pro-consumer changes as the legislation goes forward.

"Senator Klobuchar's leadership could translate into real money for Minnesota's businesses and families," said Fredregill.

A report by the Consumer Federation of America found that unfair pricing by railroads costs American consumers approximately \$3 billion every year in higher prices. The reforms sought by Sen. Klobuchar will bring greater fairness to railroad pricing, ultimately helping consumers keep more of their own money.

"There's still a lot of work to be done to make further improvements in this legislation and see it enacted into law. But great progress has been made for Minnesota's cooperatives, in large part due to Senator Klobuchar's hard work on our behalf," said Fredregill. "We would also like to thank Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) for his leadership on this issue over the years."

Gopher CURE is a coalition of freight rail customers seeking changes in federal law and policy that would require railroads to provide more competitive pricing and reliable service. More information is available at http://railcure.org/states/states_minnesota.asp.

Cooperative Network serves more than 600 member-cooperatives, owned by more than 6.3 million Wisconsin and Minnesota residents, by providing government relations, education, marketing, and technical services for a wide variety of cooperatives including farm supply, health, dairy marketing, consumer,

financial, livestock marketing, telecommunications, electric, housing, insurance, worker-owned cooperatives, and more. For more information about Cooperative Network, visit www.cooperativenetwork.coop.

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