



Alliance for Rural America

For Immediate Release
Contact: Larry Mitchell (202) 255-0990
dcplowboy@aol.com

American Corn Growers Association
National Farmers Organization
Federation of Southern Cooperatives
Women Involved in Farm Economics
National Association of Farmer Elected Committees
American Agriculture Movement
The National Grange
Oklahoma Farmers Union
Ohio Farmers Union
Texas Farmers Union
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Pennsylvania Farmers Union
Kansas Farmers Union

Alliance for Rural America Reminds Rural Voters to Include Rail Issues When Making Final Election Choices

WASHINGTON – Oct. 23, 2007 (RuralWire) – The Alliance for Rural America (ARA) announced today that agriculture is experiencing significant problems with freight rail rates and unreliable rail service. This problem is affecting the delivered price of agricultural products, the prices farmers realize from their crops, the price of energy and economic development in rural America. According to a new analysis of U.S. railroads conducted by Escalation Consultants, U.S. railroads have increased rates for transportation of farm commodities by up to 20.4 percent.

“The problem is caused by the concentration of the major rail industry over the last quarter century into only four major railroads that dominate transportation in their regions, as well as lax regulatory oversight of railroad monopoly power by the federal government,” said ARA spokesman Cole Sims. “Legislation addressing this problem is pending in the current Congress and is expected to be reintroduced in the coming Congress.”

ARA supported several bills in the current Congress which would help captive shippers challenge unfair rate increases – the Railroad Antitrust Enforcement Act, H.R. 1650 in the House and S. 772 in the Senate; and the Railroad Competition and Service Improvement Act, H.R. 2125 and S. 953. These bills would prevent the railroads from using their monopoly power to burden rail customers with excessive shipping charges and unreliable service. The bills would require the railroads to abide by the same antitrust law as other U.S. businesses and require government regulators to more rigorously oversee the actions of the major railroads.

Both major party presidential candidates in this election have, in the past, recognized the burden of increased energy, transportation and food costs on the average American. Increasing

transportation rates for shipping of corn, soybeans, wheat and ethanol is taking money directly out of the pockets of the American family farmer and yet is making the cost of providing food, fuel and fiber to the American consumer higher. ARA urges voters to look at the records of the Presidential candidates and candidates for Congress, and vote for the candidate who will address the every growing concentration of our nations' rail transportation and implement appropriate regulatory oversight of the monopolies controlling our rail transportation.

“ARA recommends that rural voters consider all important issues including rail issues, and their related impact on increased transportations cost for moving commodities to market, when making their final choices in next month's election,” concluded Sims.

The Alliance for Rural America's thirteen member organizations represent over 750,000 farmers and farm families and includes American Corn Growers Association, National Farmers Organization, Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Women Involved in Farm Economics, National Association of Farmer Elected Committees, American Agriculture Movement, The National Grange, Oklahoma Farmers Union, Ohio Farmers Union, Texas Farmers Union, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Pennsylvania Farmers Union, and Kansas Farmers Union. The ARA was formed in 1997 to represent the farm community on energy and environmental issues.