



NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Congressman John L. Mica, Ranking Republican

2163 Rayburn H.O.B. Washington, D.C. 20515 202.225.9446 republicans.transportation.house.gov

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Contact: Jason Rosa
(202) 225-9446

Commuter Rail Receives Federal Green Light

Lake Buena Vista, FL – The Central Florida Commuter Rail project made an important leap forward today when federal officials announced the project is approved to enter the Final Design phase.

“This is a major milestone for Central Florida Commuter Rail, with federal green light approval to proceed to Final Design,” said **U.S. Rep. John L. Mica (FL-07), the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Republican Leader in the U.S. House of Representatives** at a press conference today with **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary Stephanie C. Kopelousos**.

“This announcement brings Central Florida within grasp of a cost-effective alternative to crippling gasoline costs and growing highway congestion along I-4. The Commuter Rail project now joins an elite group of only five other major New Starts transit projects in Final Design around the country.”

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approval to enter Final Design marks federal recognition that all environmental work has been completed and approved, and the project sponsor can begin expenditure of federal funds for right of way acquisition, equipment and other project requirements.

“Now that we are in the Final Design phase, FDOT can enter into a contract with a design-build firm and move forward to 100 percent design, including design for the 12 stations between Fort Florida Road in DeBary and Sand Lake Road in Orlando,” **Mica** said. “In addition, Final Design means that Commuter Rail will get its own dedicated funding request in the next president’s budget, instead of simply being eligible to compete for a portion of an unspecified sum of money.”

Once the Florida Legislature approves a liability agreement to allow rail operations along the 61-mile route, FDOT will be able to immediately negotiate a Full Funding Grant Agreement with FTA – the final step in the federal process.

“Once we have a Full Funding Grant Agreement in place, actual construction can begin and Central Florida will have a more energy-efficient, environmentally friendly transportation alternative that will take thousands of cars off our roads every day,” **Mica** added.

The project is scheduled to open for revenue service in 2011.

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