

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 9, 2010

PLEASE CONTACT:

Meagan Terry

978-542-6870

meagan@masspirgstudents.org

**MASSPIRG and Representative Keenan Praise Obama
Administration for**

Sending \$1B for High Speed Rail to New England

New Report Shows Benefits of Long Term Commitment to High Speed Rail in the Region

Salem, Feb. 9 – The Obama administration’s recent decision to award \$1.2 billion in high speed rail funds to the Northeast Region is the first step towards a stronger, faster rail system that will reduce congestion, oil use, and carbon emissions, but there is much still to be done.

That was the message that State Representative John Keenan and MASSPIRG organizer Meagan Terry made clear today when they gathered at the Salem Depot to release *The Right Track*, a new research report from MASSPIRG.

“I commend the President for his investment in high speed rail in Massachusetts and across the country. This is a great report and good news not only for Salem but our state as well to bring people to work and increase passenger rail ridership. Congratulations to MASSPIRG on releasing this report,” said Representative Keenan at the press event this morning.

The new report analyzes the potential of high speed rail in nine different regions, including the Northeast Region, and presents eleven recommendations for how to spend high speed rail investments in the future. According to data cited in the report, the completion of a national high-speed rail network would reduce car travel by 29 million trips and air travel by nearly 500,000 flights annually. According to the MASSPIRG report, just improving the Downeaster line from Boston to Portland, Maine, would take enough cars off the road to reduce traffic on highways between the two cities by 81,000 vehicle miles traveled a day.

“This project might one day be part of a national network of high speed rail on par with the bullet trains of Europe and Asia, but we need the long-term support from our government to actually plan and fund this system,” said Terry. “Without such a commitment, this recent momentum could be lost. We simply cannot afford a false start on high speed rail.”

###