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Individualized letter sent to entire Committee

October 30, 2003

The Honorable Conrad Burns
U.S. Senate
187 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2603

Dear Senator Burns:

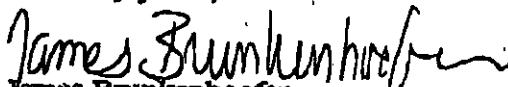
The Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation will soon be holding hearings on the nominees for Member of the Amtrak Reform Board. I wanted to call your attention to one of the nominees, Louis S. (Lou) Thompson, of Maryland.

Lou has had a long career in transportation. He was a member of the team that created Amtrak in 1970. He was the Director of the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project (NECIP) and Associate Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration supervising the Amtrak budget. He then spent 17 years as the Railways Adviser at the World Bank working in all the areas of the world on the Bank's railway lending.

He has a reputation for competence and willingness to listen. The Amtrak Board found that he "approached matters pertaining to Amtrak with reason, wisdom, and good judgment," and commended him for "the many contributions he has made to improve rail passenger service, not only in the Northeast Corridor, but throughout the Amtrak system." A New York Times editorial said: "A new Director [of the NECIP], Louis Thompson, has the respect of the region's planning and transportation officials..."

Amtrak will be facing difficult decisions in the near future as the company begins to recover from a number of years of underinvestment. The Congress and the Department of Transportation will likewise need to make complex decisions about the future of rail passenger service in this country. The Amtrak Board will need people with the expertise to understand the issues, the personal skills needed to listen to all sides, and the credibility to help reach agreements. I would like to commend Lou Thompson to you as a person who fully meets these tests.

Sincerely yours,


James Brunkenhoefer
National Legislative Director