

RAIL Magazine's National Rail Security Strategy: A Change in Priorities

In producing our special edition of *RAIL Magazine*, we brought together the best thinking, expert analysis and research on one of the key issues facing passenger rail today: security. And with each article and interview, we began to synthesize our own *RAIL Magazine* recommendations to improve passenger rail security. We consider the following five priorities the most urgent to best secure our nation's rails and passengers.

1

We must recognize that **rail security is a national priority** calling for leadership, investment and commitment at all and the highest levels of our federal government. Threats to rail security emanate from international origins and do not obey state and local jurisdictions. The federal government historically has played an important and active role in our nation's rail system, and its involvement is as crucial now as ever.

2

National priorities require national investment and we call for the creation of a **National Rail Security Trust Fund** so long-term infrastructure investments can be made based on need and not through general appropriations or competition with other national priorities. This may include user-supported subsidies akin to those currently applied to aviation. A good starting point for that investment is the \$6 billion that American Public Transportation Association (APTA) research says is necessary.

3

We favor the creation of a **National Rail Security Center**, combining intelligence and information on all aspects of rail security, training materials, incident analyses, technology research, and more. The Security Center would be implemented as a national clearinghouse for the rail community, both passenger and freight.

4

Following the example of our European partners and allies, as well as our own aviation security program, we call for the creation of a single, well-trained **National Rail Security Force**, integrated with mandatory local security plans for each passenger rail system. This team would benefit from a universal platform of training and procedures, covering the range of rail security aspects such as stations, vehicles, yards and operations control. The force would be visible on our nation's rail systems, and also closely coordinated with the activities of passenger rail operations personnel including management, front-line, dispatch and maintenance. At the same time, it would be able to react nationally as threatening conditions arise.

Local plans must be fashioned with community expertise and conditions in mind, and need to involve input from, and output to rail managers, front-line employees and passengers, and follow-up on a locally based rail threat assessment. Additionally, they must include special efforts to provide education and situational awareness to passengers, who are an important part of the rail security efforts.

5

We support the development of a **National Rail Security Technology Initiative**, which would provide investment in the right technologies for passenger rail. If chemical detection systems are deemed necessary in Washington, D.C., why not in New York City and elsewhere? Examining the details of the Madrid and Mumbai attacks, would bombproof luggage containers have helped? A National Technology Program can support efforts like the passenger rail vehicle safety standards process being led by APTA, and right-of-way monitoring projects such as the Amtrak Security Pilot Project. Every technology with the potential to improve rail security, from hardening stations and facilities to contain potential improvised explosive devices to developing unmanned aerial vehicles, must be considered. 