

SEPTEMBER 12, 2008

ELECTION YEAR BUS RIDE IN PEORIA

Across America, the rising cost of fuel has hurt an economy dependent on foreign oil. As we talk today about Green Job creation here in Central Illinois, it is important to consider the facts about public transportation throughout the country. I want to seek smart solutions to America's energy crisis that will solve this problem in a long-term and sustainable way.

Public transportation is a proven benefit to every community. For every dollar spent on federal capitol transportation projects, over six dollars is generated locally. Mass transit benefits the environment by reducing green house gas pollution by over 50% per passenger mile. Since 2007 there has been a huge increase in public transportation usage in the US, with over 10.3 billion trips taken on public transportation in the US. Public surveys indicate over 70% of taxpayers support increased funding to make mass transit more accessible, more efficient and easier to use. Unfortunately in 2008, Congressional action has only been to propose legislation to help mass transit companies, like Peoria's to help pay for the rising cost of fuel. Crisis reactive funding will not solve any long term problem and only creates more corporate oil profits instead of seeking smart solutions that will solve the problem of paying for expensive foreign oil.

If I am elected to Congress, I will be actively involved in drafting the Federal Transportation Bill in 2009. I will not only work to expand public transportation in Central Illinois, but will help bring those economic benefits to everyone. I will do this through creating manufacturing jobs and funding the construction of new high efficiency vehicles. We can and will create an American Green fleet of public transportation.

Because I know that the average American family pays 19% of their earnings on transportation, while the poorest families of our region spend more than 40%, I will work to encourage access to mass transit by keeping public fares low. Because I know that convenience and easy access is critical to obtaining increased riders, I will work to obtain operating funds to allow agencies like Greater Peoria

Mass Transit to expand and diversify their fleet, and to help develop a local biofuels markets to run those vehicles.

Investment in successful public transportation will improve the environment, provide jobs in our communities and save money for those who regularly ride the bus compared with driving a car. Instead of Democrats and Republicans blaming each other for gridlock, America can build an efficient public transportation system that creates local, sustainable jobs, reduces greenhouse gases and saves the taxpayer money.

As we start our ELECTION YEAR BUS RIDE, I encourage you to consider for a moment, what the Green transportation future will look like. Imagine hundreds of people around us using the bus, choosing from a diversity of routes that allows riders to go quickly to East Peoria and Morton, to Washington and Eureka, to Dunlap and Chillicothe, to Mackinaw and Bloomington, to Springfield or Chicago from Peoria by train. Imagine a fleet of small and large vehicles, run on locally produced fuel, heavily used, convenient and easy to use. I believe, as the Green Party does, in the future of America free from corporate control, where a sustainable, regional economy emphasizes education, provides good paying jobs and exciting opportunities for our children. Consider the future that we have the power to make new.