



# State of New Mexico

*Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

**News Release**

## Governor Bill Richardson Praises NM Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici for Securing \$89 million Towards Critical New Mexico Rail Projects

### Bill Authorizes Funding For Next Phase of Governor's Commuter Rail Initiative and Santa Teresa Rail Yard Project

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson today praised the New Mexico Congressional delegation for securing \$89 million in federal funding for rail projects in New Mexico. The funding was included in the Transportation Reauthorization Bill passed today by the United States House of Representatives. The Bill is expected to clear the United States Senate today or tomorrow and be signed into law by the President. The legislation includes \$75 million for phase II of Governor Richardson's commuter rail initiative to extend service from Bernalillo to Santa Fe, and \$14 million for a project to relocate some existing rail line and rail yards from downtown El Paso to Santa Teresa.

"This is a major step forward in our efforts to bring state-of-the-art commuter rail service to the Rio Grande corridor and continued economic growth to southern New Mexico," said Governor Richardson. "I applaud the bipartisan efforts of both Senators in helping to get this critical funding passed by Congress. They understand exactly what this means to New Mexico in terms of offering our citizens safer, more efficient commuting, as well as boosting economic development and tourism. This is true progress that will directly benefit the citizens of New Mexico and improve our quality of life."

Phase I of the commuter rail service between Belen and Bernalillo is expected to begin by the end of this year. The New Mexico Department of Transportation and the Mid-Region Council of Governments has already purchased five locomotives and 10 train cars for this service that will pick up commuters from nine train stations, including Downtown Albuquerque. Construction on eight rail stations --- Belen, Los Lunas, Isleta Pueblo, Rio Bravo/Airport, Paseo Del Norte/Jefferson, Sandi Pueblo, Downtown Bernalillo,

Sandoval/US 550 is expected to start by early September. Phase II will extend service to Santa Fe, and is expected to begin in late 2008.

The Richardson administration's proposal to relocate rail lines and some yards from the downtown areas of El Paso and Juarez to a site west of Santa Teresa, NM is set to receive \$14 million in the bill. The state has been working for two years to build a coalition of support for the project from El Paso, Juarez, the State of Chihuahua, and southern New Mexico communities. The New Mexico Border Authority, attached to the state's Economic Development Department, has taken the lead.

"This is a project that has been discussed and debated for decades, and this funding will give us a sound foothold to finally move forward," Governor Richardson said. "Moving the tracks and yards to Santa Teresa will help us provide the infrastructure to build a strong economy, and good paying jobs."

The project will ultimately cost about \$300 million and will also create a north-south connection, crossing the international border near Santa Teresa, which will remove rail traffic from Downtown Juarez.

"This project will be a huge win for southern New Mexico, El Paso, Juarez and the railroads," said Rick Homans, New Mexico Secretary of Economic Development. "The support from Washington is historic and it gives this project the recognition and credibility we need to move forward."

Representatives from New Mexico and Texas have agreed to make the project a joint undertaking of the two states to ensure that it benefits the entire Southern New Mexico and West Texas region.

The rail relocation project will improve the flow of goods through the region, improve border security, reduce auto and truck emissions caused by rail crossings in the downtown areas, and stimulate economic development in both states, Homans said.

The funding request for the Santa Teresa projects was supported by a bi-partisan and bi-state group of senators, including Senator Pete V. Domenici and Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and Senator John Cornyn of Texas, and Rep. Steven Pearce of New Mexico and Rep. Sylvestre Reyes of Texas.

Governor Richardson also credited two other members of New Mexico's congressional delegation, Representative Tom Udall and Representative Heather Wilson for their efforts to include the funding in the reauthorization bill.