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## **CARDIN CALLS FOR INCREASED PUBLIC TRANSIT AS A PATH TO ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND POLLUTION REDUCTION**

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, today called for greater investment in public transit to be included in the Senate-version of a climate change bill to be considered later this summer. During a hearing entitled, *“Transportation’s Role in Climate Change and Reducing Greenhouse Gases,”* Cardin said that a more efficient transportation system, with a robust public transit component, and secure investments in transit from revenues generated by the legislation eventually would help eliminate our dependence on foreign oil and save consumers and businesses money.

“Our transportation and energy infrastructure systems are simultaneously at a crossroads. They are connected to each other by what drives them both – fossil fuels. Americans are encouraged to conserve energy, which reduces our reliance on foreign oil, reduces carbon emissions, and saves consumers’ money. To many, this means driving less, purchasing fuel efficient vehicles and using public transportation to get around – all of which I support,” **said Senator Cardin.** “Unfortunately, funding for our surface transportation systems is reliant upon sustained, if not increased, fuel consumption in the form of the gas tax.

“Because of this divergence in policy, we need to rethink fuels and transportation planning and explore cleaner, more efficient options. We must diversify our transportation power sources to include biomass sources that do not have a direct effect on consumer food prices, and other renewable and alternative sources. Public transit must be part of the solution to this problem.

“According to the American Public Transportation Association, public transit currently saves 37 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year. These savings become even greater as more energy is generated from renewable sources. To increase the efficiency of our transportation infrastructure, and improve accessibility to transit, the carbon footprint of transportation plans must be taken into consideration prior to approval or receipt of federal transportation funds.”

Last week, the Texas Transportation Institute released its annual Mobility Report which notes that public transportation saved travelers 646 million hours in travel time in 2007. The report says that each motorist in the Maryland, DC, Virginia metro area loses an average of 62 hours and wastes an average of 42 gallons of fuel a year because they are stuck in traffic. This is despite Metro ridership being the second highest in the country after New York City.

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