

March 31, 2023

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, and  
Housing and Urban Development, and  
Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Quigley  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, and  
Housing and Urban Development, and  
Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member Quigley,

As you begin work on the Subcommittee's Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bill, we request that you support full funding for Amtrak and passenger rail programs authorized in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

The bipartisan IIJA represents Congress's historic investment in and commitment to rebuilding the crumbling bridges, roads, rail, and transit systems that serve our constituents across America. Passengers and businesses from coast to coast need safe, reliable, and modern rail infrastructure. We urge you to uphold the historic promise of the IIJA by providing the authorized funding to fix outdated rail infrastructure and invest in our 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Specifically, we ask you to support the following:

**Amtrak:** The IIJA authorizes a total of \$3.65 billion for Amtrak in FY24, with specific levels for the Amtrak Northeast Corridor (NEC) and Amtrak National Network and includes the Corridor Identification and Development and Interstate Rail Compacts programs. This represents Congress' bipartisan recognition of the need for robust rail funding to modernize our passenger rail network. We request that Amtrak be fully funded in FY24.

**Amtrak Northeast Corridor: The region served by the NEC—between Boston and Washington, D.C.—is home to more than 51 million Americans. Prior to the pandemic, more than 820,000 passengers rode** approximately 2,200 trains through the NEC each day, and ridership continues to improve since the height of the pandemic. Unfortunately, much of the NEC operates on infrastructure dating back to the early 1900's, making it prone to unexpected failures that delay service, lives, and the economy. Serious investment is needed to begin addressing the necessary upgrades to improve rail safety and efficiency. **For these reasons, we recommend providing the authorized level of \$1.2 billion for the Northeast Corridor in FY24, which aligns with Amtrak's request for FY24.**

**Amtrak National Network:** Amtrak’s National Network service supports 28 state-supported routes and 15 long-distance routes throughout the country, connecting hundreds of rural communities with our urban centers, and providing alternative travel options. To ensure the National Network is safe, reliable, and on time, **we urge you to provide the authorized level of \$2.45 billion for the National Network in FY24, which aligns with Amtrak’s request for FY24.**

**Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program:** The CRISI program is designed to provide financial support for project development and infrastructure upgrades—including station improvements, improving rail system reliability, and grade crossing projects—to ensure efficient and safe rail service. The CRISI program provides flexible funding to meet the increasing widespread demand for rail investments and now makes Tribes and short line associations eligible for funding. **With this in mind, we recommend that you fully fund the program at \$1 billion, the level authorized in the IIJA for FY24, to maintain this essential program.**

**Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program:** This program represents a prudent investment by providing operating assistance to establish, rehabilitate, or expand intercity passenger rail transportation, a critical service for Tribes and communities with no or limited rail services. In recent years, the program was severely underfunded, and **we therefore urge you to provide full funding for this program at \$50 million in FY24, as authorized in IIJA.**

**Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grants:** The IIJA also modified the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail program to reduce the state of good repair backlog for passenger rail infrastructure, equipment, and facilities. In addition to bringing existing infrastructure into a state of good repair, projects that replace existing assets with those that increase capacity and service levels are also eligible for this funding, as well as investing in new and expanded passenger rail service. **Given the significant number of upgrades needed along our railways and great potential to bring new and improved passenger rail service to our communities, we recommend \$1.5 billion for this grant program in FY24, as authorized in IIJA.**

**Railroad Crossing Elimination Program:** The IIJA authorized a new program intended to make improvements to highway-railway crossing, including eliminating at-grade crossings that may be blocked by trains, can create safety concerns, and slow rail service. This new program demonstrates Congress’ priority of improving the safety of our communities and increasing the mobility of people and goods. **Given the urgent need to eliminate highway-railroad grade crossings, we encourage you to fully fund this new program at \$500 million in FY24, as authorized in IIJA.**

Passenger rail holds a storied place in American history. It has created jobs, fostered community development, and promoted economic growth for decades. Today, American railways are

lagging behind the rest of the world. We acknowledge that this year's spending decisions are difficult, but we have a responsibility to bring our infrastructure into the future to compete in the global economy, serve passengers across the nation, and invest in good-paying jobs for thousands of workers.

We urge you to strongly support these rail programs as recommended in the FY24 THUD Appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

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