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States for
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June 29, 2017

The Honorable Senator Deb Fischer, Nebraska
Member
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 512
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Railroad Advancement of Innovation and Leadership with Safety (RAILS) Act

Dear Senator Fischer:

I am writing on behalf of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC) to express our appreciation for the introduction of the Railroad Advancement of Innovation and Leadership with Safety (RAILS) Act. This much-needed legislation requires the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to use best practices in accordance with long-standing executive orders to conduct rule-making and in developing guidance. We believe that the result will be processes that use performance-based rules and sound evidence, are inclusive of the rail industry and maintain transparency amongst all stakeholders.

SPRC especially appreciates the efforts of the Committee to clarify that States, and political subdivisions of States, who sponsor, but do not operate intercity passenger rail services, are not railroads nor are they railroad carriers. This is critical as states endeavor to utilize the rail mode as part of the nation's multimodal transportation system.

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC) is an advocacy group made up of 25 State departments of transportation and passenger rail authority leaders from across the United States who work together to support the development and growth of passenger rail service for America. Established in 2000, the SPRC currently has members representing the States of California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. Additional members include Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA), the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail (LOSSAN) Corridor Agency, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA), and the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA).

Our members sponsor a combined 29 intercity passenger rail routes serving 296 communities across America. Last year our trains carried almost 15 million passengers, representing 48% of Amtrak's total ridership. Since 2015, we have contributed over \$750 million per year in revenues to Amtrak, through \$525 million in passenger revenues plus \$225 million in contract payments.

As intercity passenger rail service sponsors, SPRC members are steadfastly committed to safety, service quality, and reliability. Safety is critical to our service, passengers, employees, host railroads, and the communities we serve. There is no doubt that passengers and rail employees are safer on intercity trains than any other mode of transportation and that a strong and reliable national system approach to intercity passenger rail is critical to ensuring safety and mobility for all.

California
Connecticut
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Louisiana
Massachusetts
Maine
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
Nevada
New York
North Carolina
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
Wisconsin
Capitol Corridor
Joint Powers
Authority
Northern
New England
Passenger
Rail Authority
LOSSAN Joint Powers
Authority
San Joaquin Joint
Powers Authority

SPRC members also partner with the freight railroads to implement network capacity and safety improvements needed to ensure effective freight and intercity passenger rail services.

Additionally, SPRC members also partner with the USDOT to manage the Federal Highway Administration-sponsored highway-railroad crossing safety program; the Federal Transit Administration-sponsored State Safety Oversight Program; and the FRA-certified State Rail Safety Programs. SPRC members are also active in local Operation Lifesaver Rail Safety Education Programs.

We invite you and your staff members to visit any of our systems across America, to experience personally the benefits of intercity passenger rail service. SPRC members would be more than happy to arrange visits, facility tours, or other opportunities to experience the fastest growing segment of the passenger rail business.

Thank you for your continued support and leadership.

Sincerely,



Paul C. Worley, CPM
Rail Division Director
North Carolina Department of Transportation
Chair, the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc.