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States for
www.s4prc.org



Via Email

Date: May 28, 2020

Representative David E. Price, Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC, 20515

Representative Mario Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

Understanding the unprecedented financial crisis the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on the Nation's Intercity Passenger Rail systems, and on the Amtrak capital programs and operating revenues in particular; the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC), consisting of twenty four states and passenger rail authorities (www.S4PRC.org), supports a Federal Fiscal Year 2021 supplemental appropriation for Amtrak.

Many of our states and authorities financially support Amtrak through contracted services which provide direct rail access to communities across the country. We have witnessed first-hand the severe impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our passenger rail and transportation systems nationally, including the complete suspension of numerous passenger rail services. During normal operations, States generate approximately \$530M annually in passenger fares to Amtrak and an additional \$280M in direct state financial support. Significantly reduced ticket revenues will continue into FY21 as the economy recovers, anticipated at less than half of FY19 revenues. Even at reduced service levels, the Amtrak-State cost-sharing policy, mandated by Congress, would require significant increases to States' operating support due to Amtrak, at a time when state budgets are tightening. Continuation of regional services across the country are in jeopardy without supplemental support to Amtrak to cover the unanticipated shortfalls resulting from the pandemic. These passenger services are vitally important for ensuring a national, multimodal transportation system to support the economic recovery. SPRC recognizes that there is a clear need for additional funding for Amtrak and the States as they look to recover to pre-COVID-19 levels of ridership and service.

Amtrak and the States have been working together to adjust our services to maximize safety and to offset costs. However, it is imperative that the national passenger rail network receive adequate federal financial support to continue as a viable part of our integrated transportation system and to aid in the nation's economic recovery.

Supplemental financial support will be needed to continue to provide long-distance intercity passenger rail service across the country. Without this support, many communities may be at risk of being cut off from the national network and losing an important transportation service. Removal of long-distance services would disproportionately impact rural communities across the country. SPRC strongly supports continuation of long-distance service as part of the national network in FY21 and beyond.

California

*Colorado - Southwest
Chief & Front Range
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*Capitol Corridor
Joint Powers Authority*

*Northern
New England
Passenger
Rail Authority*

*LOSSAN
Joint Powers Authority*

*San Joaquin
Joint Powers Authority*

Therefore, the States for Passenger Rail Coalition's full membership supports a supplemental Amtrak appropriation that would protect the long-term stability of the network - long-distance, state supported, and Northeast Corridor (NEC) services.

Our Member organizations stand ready to provide any additional information that may help in advancing this critical request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arun Rao".

Arun Rao, AICP; Chair, States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc.
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