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Via Email

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Person Submitting Testimony:

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Managing Director, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

Submitted to:

The Subcommittee on the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Agency the testimony is addressing:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary and the Federal Railroad Administration

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC) is an advocacy group consisting of 20 State departments of transportation and four passenger rail authorities from across the United States who work together to support the development and growth of passenger rail service. Established in 2000, the SPRC has members representing the States of California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. Additional members include the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, and the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority.

In addition to the Amtrak National System routes our Members sponsor 29 intercity passenger rail routes serving 296 communities across America. Last year these trains carried almost 15 million passengers, representing 47% of Amtrak's total ridership. This contributed \$786 million in revenue to Amtrak, through \$565 million in passenger revenues plus \$233 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.

Therefore, we are extremely grateful for the Subcommittee's leadership in advancing the increased rail program funding levels that are provided in this year's budget. This investment in rail will enable our States and Rail Authorities to build upon their well-documented success in strengthening our national intercity passenger rail network.

As you turn your attention to FY19, we urge the Senate THUD Subcommittee to build upon the crucial rail transportation infrastructure investments through similar or increased levels in the following programs:

- Amtrak's National Network, which supports both the national long distance intercity passenger rail network and the existing 29 state-supported routes. These investments are the life blood of our passenger rail system. The funds are used to maintain existing equipment and infrastructure, invest in improvements that support faster, safe, frequent and reliable service,

replace the aging fleet of locomotives and passenger rail cars, improve station accessibility under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and implement safety and security projects.

- Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, which supports our nation's vital rail corridor from Boston, MA to Washington, DC. In addition to connecting the Northeast's major metropolitan centers nearly half of the nation's rail commuter trips depend on the Northeast Corridor infrastructure.
- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grants program, which includes eligibility for a broad range of rail projects and activities such as the deployment of vitally needed rail safety technology including Positive Train Control (PTC), track upgrades to address congestion challenges for both passenger and freight service, rail line relocations, projects to improve multimodal passenger connections, rail research, and highway-rail grade crossing improvements.
- Federal-State Partnership of State of Good Repair (SOGR) grants program, to replace or repair critical rail assets suffering from a backlog of deferred maintenance.
- Restoration and Enhancement grants program, to restore intercity passenger rail routes to underserved communities in need of economic development and mobility that a connection to the nation's rail network would bring.
- Competitive, merit-based BUILD Grants (previously known as TIGER Grants), which enable State and local governments to build innovative multimodal and multi-jurisdictional projects, where possible in partnership with private contributions, which are unlikely to receive support from other federal sources.
- New Starts/Small Starts Capital Investment Grants, which communities use to leverage local investments to build and expand commuter rail, light rail, and heavy rail systems. There is tremendous demand for these rail systems - far more than is available even at the FY18 appropriations level.
- Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) Loan Program, an underutilized loan program with great potential benefits that will be enhanced with the appropriation provided in FY18. Additional funding in FY19 will be critical to maintaining this momentum.
- Continue to provide the authorized funding levels to support the activities of the State Supported Route Committee (SAIPRC), created by the FAST Act, which is essential for the growth and well-being of the national intercity passenger rail system that provides a vital connection to metropolitan regions with rural communities.
- Funding to continue the activities of the Section 305 Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee, (NGEC) reauthorized in the FAST Act, to continue to advance the development and maintenance of standardized next generation passenger rail equipment specifications in support of lowering operating and maintenance costs, extending vehicle life expectancy, and reinvigorating the US Rail manufacturing and supply industry.

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition stands ready to assist the Subcommittee and the full Appropriations Committee, as you look to build upon the FY18 investments in rail infrastructure, both public and private.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this critical topic. We would be more than happy to provide additional information as requested.

Sincerely,



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