



July 10, 2017

United States House of Representatives

Dear Members of the Committee on Appropriations:

As you prepare to mark-up Fiscal Year 2018 Appropriations for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, the OneRail Coalition urges you to support investments in rail infrastructure and operations. These investments will create and maintain good domestic jobs, spur economic growth, relieve road and air congestion, protect the environment, and facilitate growth in one of the safest modes of transportation.

In December 2015, Congress passed a multi-year surface transportation authorization bill for the first time in more than a decade – the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act, P.L. 114-94). The bipartisan support of this bill, verified by an overwhelming 83-16 vote in the Senate and 359-65 in the House, was an acknowledgement that even in politically turbulent times we can all agree that long term, sustainable investment in a strong and resilient infrastructure is critical to moving our nation forward.

This bipartisan achievement calls for robust FY 2018 transportation appropriations to build on the recently completed FY17 appropriations bill and continue implementation of the programs authorized in the FAST Act. In particular, the OneRail Coalition urges fully funding the following provisions at the authorized FAST Act levels:

<p>The Northeast Corridor supports the nation's critical rail corridor extending from Boston down to Washington, DC. Authorization: Amtrak's grant and legislative request is \$358m, consistent with the overall Amtrak FAST Act authorization of \$1.6b.</p>	<p>The Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program is a national program with passenger and freight eligibilities, covering important rail safety and capital needs: authorized at \$230m.</p>
<p>The National Network supports both the continued operation of the national intercity passenger rail network and state-supported routes: Amtrak's grant and legislative request is \$1.242b, consistent with the overall Amtrak FAST Act authorization of \$1.6b. Within the national network, we note that elimination of long-distance routes would be a major disruption to the intercity passenger rail network and would also likely be counter-productive as far as budget savings go.</p>	<p>The Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair program provides funding for capital projects to improve or replace faltering infrastructure assets: authorized at \$175m.</p>

<p>New Starts/Small Starts/Core Capacity Capital Investment grants are used throughout the country to leverage local investments to build and expand commuter rail, light rail, and heavy rail systems: authorized at \$2.3018b.</p>	<p>The Restoration and Enhancement program provides grants for restoring or improving intercity passenger rail routes to underserved communities in need of economic development and mobility: authorized at \$20m.</p>
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Within the Amtrak NEC and National Network request, OneRail also endorses the **Advance Appropriations** request specified in Amtrak's Grant and Legislative Report/FY18 Budget Request. Until the time when intercity passenger rail can become part of a broader transportation trust fund with contract authority, advance appropriations would be an effective mechanism to provide a predictable funding stream that would make long-term capital planning for intercity passenger rail investments more efficient and productive.

Also, the OneRail Coalition supports robust funding of the competitive, merit-based, **TIGER grants program** to enable States and local governments to build innovative multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional projects, frequently in partnership with significant private contributions. Within TIGER, OneRail supports adding a RRIF Credit Risk Premium (CRP) subsidy as an eligible use, identical to the way that a TIFIA subsidy is an eligible. This would be consistent with the Administration's FY18 budget request to eliminate the prohibition on using federal funds for the CRP.

Finally, the OneRail Coalition urges there to be no changes in Federal truck size and weight laws.

The OneRail Coalition opposes any amendment that would increase federal limits on truck weights from 80,000 to 91,000 pounds, nationally or in a single state, which would further stress the nation's already underfunded highway network. At a time when state and local transportation departments are straining to meet infrastructure maintenance demands for the foreseeable future, actions that will accelerate highway damage and costs by diverting freight traffic from privately funded railroads to publicly subsidized roads and putting heavier trucks on those roads are not in the national interest.

Further, actions that would divert freight traffic from the railroads to the nation's highways would add to highway congestion, fuel consumption, and harmful emissions. Finally, diversion of freight from rail to truck could diminish railroad resources available to invest in the rail infrastructure network on which growth in freight rail, intercity passenger rail, and commuter rail service depends.

There is broad opposition to increasing truck size and weight limits: from truckload carriers and truck drivers, public health and safety groups, truck crash victims and families, and law enforcement. Public opinion is also consistently and strongly opposed to bigger and longer trucks. More than 77 percent of the public opposes longer trucks, according to a recent independent public opinion poll.

And in fact, Congress considered and rejected bigger trucks multiple times in November of 2015 during FAST Act consideration:

- On Nov. 3, 2015, the House rejected increasing truck weight limits from 80,000 pounds to 91,000 pounds on a 187-236 floor vote
- On Nov. 10, 2015, the Senate rejected increasing the length of double-trailer trucks as part of the surface transportation reauthorization bill on a 31-56 Floor vote
- On Nov. 18, 2015, the Senate rejected increasing the length of double-trailer trucks on the omnibus spending bill on a voice vote

In conclusion, the OneRail Coalition believes that rail is a crucial component of an efficient transportation network that allows people and goods to move quickly and safely to their destinations, enhancing productivity, creating jobs, and allowing America to remain the largest and best functioning economy in the world. A smooth logistics system with intermodal connectivity and without major chokepoints also strengthens our exporters' ability to compete in the global economy.

The nation's privately owned freight railroads are investing billions in their own infrastructure and equipment – over \$22 billion planned in 2017 and more than \$630 billion total since 1980. While this private sector investment will continue on the freight network, public investments in rail transportation infrastructure, particularly for passenger rail, are also critical to spur economic growth and encourage new business development, adding new jobs and expanding employment opportunities nationwide. Intercity and commuter rail along with other rail transit systems move people more than 100 million passenger-miles every week day in urban and rural America - public investment is essential to maintain reliability and grow these services.

Investment in rail infrastructure, both private and public, also supports hundreds of thousands of good-paying private sector rail supply and service jobs throughout the country. The record is clear that rail is safe, productive, efficient, and environmentally sustainable, and that rail promotes energy independence and contributes positively to public health and well-being.

The OneRail Coalition thanks you for considering our thoughts. We would be pleased to discuss the benefits of rail investments in greater detail with you.

Sincerely,

Anne Canby
Director, OneRail Coalition

About the OneRail Coalition:

OneRail is a diverse group of rail stakeholders who have come together to educate America about the benefits of a strong freight and passenger rail system. Our members include the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners (**AAPRCO**), American Public Transportation Association (**APTA**), American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (**ASLRRRA**), **Amtrak**, Association of American Railroads (**AAR**), Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (**BLET**), Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (**BMWE**), Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (**BRS**), National Association of Railroad Passengers (**NARP**), National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association (**NRC**), Railway Supply Institute (**RSI**), **SMART** Transportation Division, States for Passenger Rail Coalition (**S4PRC**), and the Transportation Communications International Union/International Association of Machinists (**TCU/IAM**).

Our Associate Supporters include **AECOM**, **Alstom**, **Caterpillar**, **General Electric**, **HNTB**, **Parsons**, **WSP**, and **Siemens**. These global companies represent the engineering and manufacturing sectors that are an essential component of private sector job creation in the transportation industry in the United States.