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States for
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December 2, 2015

Ms. Sarah Feinberg
Federal Railroad Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

Via email to: Sarah.Feinberg@dot.gov

Dear Administrator Feinberg:

On behalf of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC), I commend you for your ongoing rigorous commitment to rail safety. We are heartened by your recent speech on implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) before the members of the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to implement a broad array of strategies that will improve rail safety.

Safety is a critical aspect of the national intercity passenger rail system. Each component of the system; state sponsored routes, longer distance trains, and the Northeast Corridor (NEC), has a strong set of interdependent safety needs and concerns. Because the system is national in scope, there is a continued role for federal financial investment. No one business line of the national system is sustainable on its own, each line feeds and supports the whole, as well as providing connections to other travel services.

As you are well aware, states and local authorities also make important contributions to the national system. SPRC members sponsor 28 intercity passenger routes serving 296 communities across America. Last year our trains carried nearly 15 million passengers, representing nearly 49% of Amtrak's total ridership. We also contributed \$766 million in revenues to Amtrak, through \$486 million in passenger revenues plus \$280 million in contract payments. We manage these funds—public and private, state and federal—in a business-like manner taking into account all of the public costs and benefits of passenger rail service including; economic development and employment creation and retention, access to educational opportunities, environmental stewardship, energy conservation, and safety.

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, 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, national system approach to intercity passenger rail is critical to ensuring safety for all.

While, in the coming weeks, discordant voices may challenge these principles, we continue to rely on you, and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to support a safe, viable, and financially healthy, national intercity passenger rail system.

Sincerely,

Patricia Quinn
Chair, States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc.
Executive Director, Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

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