

Michael W. Hancock, P.E., President  
Secretary, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

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September 16, 2014

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II  
Ranking Member  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Denham  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous  
Materials  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-376 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Corrine Brown  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous  
Materials  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-376 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member Rahall, Chairman Denham, and Ranking Member Brown:

On behalf of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, we applaud the bipartisan approach taken by House Transportation and Infrastructure leadership in developing H.R. 5449, the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2014. Forty nine percent of Amtrak ridership is on state-supported rail corridors, and this legislation seeks to ensure that states have a greater role in decisions affecting these routes.

H.R. 5449 contains many of the reforms State Departments of Transportation are seeking for our Nation's passenger rail system. Greater transparency in Amtrak accounting and providing states information to assist Amtrak in reducing costs and making data-driven decisions, are key elements to growing and improving passenger rail service. Streamlining environmental reviews and accelerating project delivery will promote consistency across U.S. Department of Transportation modal administrations to ensure that rail projects continue to advance and investment is made in a timely manner to develop service options that will boost economic development and create jobs. Providing states the eligibility to invest in capital infrastructure improvements will help to improve safety, on-time performance, increase frequency and reliability and provide a program of projects that will continue to advance intercity passenger rail.

Finally, it is important to highlight the continued need for a strong federal-state partnership in delivering passenger rail services, especially in the areas of standard setting, research and addressing state of good repair needs. States along the Northeast Corridor continue to invest in Amtrak's operations and capital, and state of good repair should remain a priority.

We look forward to working with the leadership and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as you advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael W. Hancock".

Michael W. Hancock, P.E.  
President  
Secretary, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet