



**States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC)
Federal Surface Transportation Authorization Principles
March 2021**

Intercity passenger rail serves the important role of providing affordable mobility across the social and economic spectrum encompassing America's rural and urban landscape. Additionally, passenger rail travel helps reduce energy consumption and pollution.

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition strongly supports the following:

Establishment of a dedicated capital funding program for intercity passenger rail. The new program should include formula funding with match requirements that mirror the Federal Highway Program and should be in addition to any existing and proposed discretionary grant programs. Consistent and predictable funding streams would provide the foundation for state investments in existing services and the development of new services.

Reauthorization of funding for both the Amtrak National Network and the Amtrak Northeast Corridor to continue efficient and effective passenger rail mobility, recognizing that it is a national modal network.

Reauthorization of capital and operating funding for the existing, highly competitive discretionary programs at levels more in line with identified intercity passenger rail needs. The "Projects in the Pipeline" Report, jointly developed based on SPRC and AASHTO member surveys, identifies 80 passenger rail capital projects, requiring \$17B of investment, which are ready or almost ready for final design, or construction grant applications. An additional 75 projects, reflecting a \$41B investment level, were identified as being in the scoping phase.

- **Reauthorized Discretionary Programs should include:**
 - **Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant Program,**
 - **State of Good Repair Grant Program (SOGR), and**
 - **Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program.**
- **All discretionary intercity passenger rail grant programs should allow broad eligibility to include States, transportation authorities, compacts/commissions, and Amtrak.** Eligible projects should include infrastructure improvements, rolling stock acquisition, capital maintenance of equipment, Positive Train Control (PTC) maintenance activities and costs, and funding for emerging technologies to enhance safety and environmental improvements.
- **Federal funding should be made available to support the operation of newly initiated or expanded passenger rail routes during the first few years of service.** Transitional operating assistance is critically important and would help states establish or increase service.
- **Funding programs should permit multi-year federal agreements to support larger scale passenger rail investments, with partial funding of project elements (without independent utility).**

- **Eligibility for the State of Good Repair Program should expand beyond "publicly owned assets" to include non-public assets with the requirement that some level of public access (e.g., railroad slots or shared public ownership) be guaranteed as a result. Eligibility should also be expanded to include capital overhauls of passenger rail equipment.**
- **No less than 80% of funding for capital projects should be available for federal awards and matched through a combination of state, local, regional, and private funding.** To ensure equity across the country, project selection criteria should not prioritize a higher share of the non-federal match.
- **Clear timelines should be established for the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to award and deploy grant programs.** Delays can limit the ability for states to commit to and deliver programs.
- **Federal credit programs should not be counted as part of the Federal financial share of projects.**

Reauthorization of the following rail-related entities and authorization of funds necessary to ensure the continuity of their operations:

- **the State-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee (SAIPRC)**
- **the Northeast Corridor Commission (NECC)**
- **Operation Lifesaver, Inc.**
- **the PRIIA Section 305 - Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC)**

Updates and revisions to the PRIIA 209 Cost Methodology Policy to address the cost approach and the business relationship between the States and Amtrak as outlined in the principles established by the States-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee (SAIPRC). The policy statement can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/SAIPRC-209-Principles>.

Reauthorization of the PRIIA 305 Next Generation Corridor Equipment Committee (NGEC). The NGEC has successfully formed a collaboration among states, Amtrak, FRA and over 200 rail manufacturing and supply companies to develop standardized passenger rail equipment specifications and document management procedures to keep them current. The result has been lower costs, revitalized domestic production, an invigorated supply chain and the creation of high-wage jobs. For more information on the NGEC please see www.ngec305.org

Amtrak Board reform to include Board transparency in decision making and consideration of all three service lines – the Northeast Corridor (NEC), State-Supported, and Long-Distance Routes.

Funding and resources sufficient to enable the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to fulfill its investigative authority in monitoring Amtrak's performance and access on railroads.

Inclusion of language affirming that States who sponsor but do not operate, intercity passenger rail services, are not railroads, nor are they railroad carriers.

Establishment of a Long-Distance Rail Route Task Force or Commission as envisioned under PRIIA Section 210, to include funding authorized to support its operation.