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April 12, 2021

As you consider successor legislation to the FAST Act, the States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC) would like to reiterate and elaborate on our request (previously included in our Principles for Reauthorization - attached) that the Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC) be reauthorized to continue its mission to provide national leadership in standardization, acquisition, and management of passenger rail equipment while assisting in reinvigorating the passenger rail manufacturing and supply industry in the U.S.

To date, The NGEC has developed 6 passenger rail vehicle specifications and they are being used by an ever-increasing number of entities in procuring new rail equipment. Some of those entities include; the states of California, Washington, Illinois, Michigan Missouri, Wisconsin, New York (Metro-North), and Connecticut, as well as Amtrak, VIA Rail, Canada, and All Aboard Florida (now Brightline).

Of great significance and cost savings, the NGEC has helped to facilitate historic multi-state passenger rail vehicle procurements. For example, California (as lead State) along with the Mid-West States (Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin) are well along in the process of manufacturing and delivering single level passenger rail cars. The NGEC work has been crucial to these procurements and it is because of this that many cars are delivered on-site and will begin entering revenue service in late Spring/early Summer. Illinois (as lead state) along with its Mid-West state partners, plus California, and Washington, have procured and introduced into service diesel-electric Locomotives. Connecticut is in the early stages of its procurement of single level passenger rail cars and is also using an NGEC specification. Metro-North Railroad and Long Island Railroad (as well as NGEC member New York State DOT) worked with the NGEC on the development of its Dual Mode Locomotive specification for access to and from the New York Tunnels. This procurement is underway with Metro-North as the lead agency. Private entities such as All Aboard Florida (now Brightline) also used the NGEC specifications as a basis for procuring passenger rail equipment. Additionally, the NGEC specifications were utilized by Amtrak in its ongoing vehicle procurement which includes trainsets, locomotives, and intercity passenger rail. Even our neighbors from the north – VIA Rail, Canada, have utilized the NGEC specifications and are keeping the committee informed of its progress.

More and more, as the demand for next generation passenger rail equipment comes to the forefront, the NGEC specifications, with an approximate value of \$2 million each, are being relied upon in the procurement of passenger rail equipment.

Additionally, on February 23, 2021 during its 11th Annual Meeting (held virtually) the NGEC Executive Board adopted a best practices and lessons learned guidance document (PRIIA 305-202-Recommended Practices) for use by entities during current and future passenger rail equipment procurements. It is a living document that will be updated periodically as additional procurements are experienced.

NGEC Reauthorization proposed scope and funding language:

(§24101): The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 directed Amtrak, states, FRA and the industry to establish the Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC) to standardize and streamline the process for designing and obtaining next-generation passenger rail equipment purchased with federal funding. The FAST Act reauthorized the NGEC. The NGEC is the national leader in standardization, acquisition, and management of passenger rail equipment. The Committee effectively developed 6 vehicle specifications that focus on single level cars, bi-level cars, single level train sets, diesel-electric locomotives, diesel multiple units, and dual-mode locomotives. Its document control procedures enable a review of the use of specifications and requests for modifications in order to continuously improve these specifications as new developments are conceived in vehicle production/manufacturing. The Committee has succeeded in lowering operating and maintenance costs and extending vehicle life expectancy.

California
Colorado
Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission

Connecticut
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa

Louisiana
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota

Missouri
Nevada
New York
North Carolina

Oregon
Pennsylvania
Vermont
Virginia

Washington
Wisconsin
Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

LOSSAN Joint Powers Authority
San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

Lastly, the NGEC sparked domestic production, invigorated the supply chain, and created high-wage jobs. It is important that Congress reauthorize the Committee in order to continue to improve the management of current and future equipment needs.

SPRC suggests the following actions for consideration in the Surface Transportation Authorization legislation:

- 1) Reauthorize the NGEC and provide \$2,500,000 over the life of the bill for the NGEC activities;
- 2) Authorize the NGEC to:
 - a. Continue its document management efforts to maintain and improve upon its current passenger rail equipment specifications through existing NGEC procedures;
 - b. Continue its work in documenting best practices and lessons learned in equipment acquisition and ownership including; maintaining and updating its living reference document (PRIIA 305-200 Recommended Practices) which provides guidance and recommended practices for current and future equipment procurements;
 - c. Continue to work with entities like the Transportation Research Board (TRB) to leverage limited funding for additional research;
 - d. Develop high speed rail equipment specifications;
- 3) Award preference to entities using NGEC specifications who seek discretionary federal funding for new passenger rail equipment;

Sincerely



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