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Rail Authority  
  
Southern High  
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Commission

April 26, 2013

The Honorable Tom Latham  
Chair  
House Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Transportation, HUD, and  
Related Agencies  
2217 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ed Pastor  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Transportation, HUD and  
Related Agencies  
2465 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Latham and Ranking Member Pastor:

On behalf of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC), an organization

representing 34 member states across the nation, thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the FY 2014 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) appropriation process. As state officials, we appreciate the extraordinary budgetary constraints you face. We continue to believe strongly that investment in intercity passenger rail to increase frequencies, allow better equipment utilization, reduce travel times, and ultimately grow both ridership and revenue will lead to valuable economic growth and environmental benefits for the nation. The improvements that are made are generally on privately-owned freight railroads and will not decrease their ability to meet their customer's transportation needs. To that end, we respectfully submit the following policy proposals:

- We support \$500 million for the TIGER program. This program has funded an array of critical projects. As in past years, we urge that the emphasis again be placed on awards based on a rigorous benefit-cost analysis.
- Provide \$500 million for Sections 301, 302, and 501 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA). With no earmarks, and an emphasis on "readiness to proceed," the money should be awarded competitively and spent promptly. More specifically, ten percent of the funding should be used for planning purposes.

- We strongly support the Administration's proposal for \$300 million for a five-year state corridor program. These funds would be used both for purchase of new equipment as well as providing marginal funding for implementation of PRIIA Section 209. The implementation of Section 209 did not start immediately after passage of the legislation in 2008, but the states affected by Section 209 have been working diligently with Amtrak, the current service provider, to implement the policy. Despite that consistent collaboration, the work is by no means complete. It is critical to note that the funds proposed by the President are for the delta between the amount currently paid by the states and the amount to be agreed to as a result of negotiations between the states and Amtrak.
- The Northeast Corridor (NEC), which essentially serves as an extra two lanes on I-95, is the main street of the region. We urge that such sums as may be necessary be provided for three key infrastructure projects: (1) Baltimore Tunnel; (2) Susquehanna Bridges; and (3) the Gateway project.
- We respect the efforts of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to explore the future of the Northeast Corridor. We strongly encourage the Subcommittee to provide \$25 million for the FRA's environment and planning efforts.
- We support \$1 million to continue the highly-successful work of the Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC) in order to continue to build on the foundation it has established. As you know, PRIIA Section 305 called for the establishment of the NGEC "...to design, develop specifications for, and procure standardized next-generation corridor equipment." Since its inception in January of 2010, the NGEC has developed, adopted, and promulgated five specifications for next generation rail equipment, and has initiated a ground-breaking multi-state procurement for next generation bi-level passenger rail cars. A second multi-state procurement is currently underway for the manufacture of diesel-electric locomotives.

By providing publicly available standardized specifications, the NGEC has created a common platform from which multiple states can procure rail equipment. The standardized specifications make it possible to buy equipment faster, at a lower cost, and with lower future costs relating to maintenance, rebuilding, and the purchase of additional equipment. NGEC-developed specifications, available to all competitors in the rail equipment marketplace, will mean that equipment procured will expand employment opportunities in the U.S. domestic production, supply, and manufacturing industries.

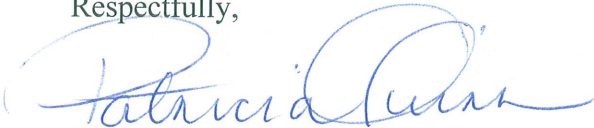
- The Rail Line Relocation Program has assisted rural communities in meeting safety and operational challenges. We request that this program be provided \$25 million.
- The implementation of positive train control (PTC) is a daunting task for all concerned; we ask that you provide \$100 million to assist in this vital effort.



Again, we are very aware of Congress' larger responsibility to balance long-term infrastructure investment with scarce financial resources; however, we believe it is vital that we do not under-invest in the nation's transportation system. Doing so would seriously limit the nation's ability to compete in the global marketplace, while also having a negative impact on safety, security and mobility.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with our comments and for your continued support. Please contact me directly if I may provide additional information.

Respectfully,



Patricia Quinn

Executive Director, Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority  
Chair, States for Passenger Rail Coalition