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VIA EMAIL

February 3, 2021

The Honorable Peter M. Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary, Buttigieg:

Congratulations and best wishes on your confirmation as Secretary of Transportation!

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC) looks forward to working with you and your team on advancing intercity passenger rail as a critical part of our nation's transportation system. SPRC is an alliance of 23 state and regional transportation officials and Passenger rail authorities from across the United States and is the only such organization whose membership is solely comprised of state agencies.

Our Mission is to promote the development, implementation, and expansion of intercity passenger rail as part of an integrated national transportation network. It accomplishes this by working together with a non-partisan approach to:

- Advocate and assist in the pursuit of state and federal funding to support the ongoing development of America's passenger rail system;
- Support current efforts and projects managed by state transportation departments;
- Promote research, planning, development, implementation, operation, sustainability, and expansion, of publicly supported intercity passenger rail service throughout the United States;
- Facilitate coordination and cooperation among state officials and between the public and private sector at all levels (federal, state, and local)

The year 2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the Coalition; however, with the continuing global pandemic raging, it is a year all of us wish had played out differently. Nonetheless, we have faith in our country and its institutions, and we look forward to a healthier America with a robust economic recovery this year.

An efficient, environmentally friendly, and safe transportation network plays an essential role in responding to the health and economic crises. Especially during the pandemic and continuing financial crisis, unhindered access to multiple transportation modes enables the continued flow of vitally needed workers, goods, and services. Transportation is a crucial component in responding to recessionary pressures, with all government levels being critical partners in ensuring the vitality of our infrastructure and mobility.

Intercity passenger rail has proven to be a fundamental component of our nation's transportation network. It represents a viable, energy-efficient, and economically attractive transportation option that has seen significant increases in ridership over the past several years, reaching a record high in 2019. The road to economic recovery must include a rebounding and expanding rail system that efficiently moves goods by commercial freight railroads while carrying passengers on an interconnected network of regional, long-distance, and commuter rail trains. Improving our passenger rail system will require significant investment in railroad infrastructure and equipment, but these investments will lead to substantial job growth and economic returns.

States and intercity passenger rail operating agencies are the primary entities responsible for the initiation, implementation, oversight, and operation of the shorter-distance intercity passenger rail services.

California

*Colorado - Southwest
Chief & Front Range
Passenger Rail
Commission*

Connecticut

Illinois

Indiana

Iowa

Louisiana

Massachusetts

Michigan

Minnesota

Missouri

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*

The SPRC Member Agencies have a vested interest and play a vital role with each of Amtrak's three main business lines: 1) the Long Distance trains that provide intercity passenger rail transportation on 15 routes of more than 750 miles between endpoints; 2) the State Supported trains that offer intercity passenger rail service along shorter-distance corridor routes of not more than 750 miles between endpoints; and, 3) the Northeast Corridor (NEC) service operating between Boston, New York City, and Washington DC.

Our members sponsor a combined 29 intercity passenger rail routes serving 296 communities across America. In the year leading up to the 2020 State Supported trains carried over 15 million passengers, representing over 47% of Amtrak's total ridership, the largest source of ridership among the three Amtrak business lines. They also contributed nearly \$750 million to Amtrak through a combination of \$521 million in passenger revenue plus \$225 million in contract payments. Without question, our Coalition Members' contributions and support of passenger rail have aided our state, regional and national economies.

We are poised to return these services to pre-pandemic levels as the economy improves and the traveling public returns to take advantage of the beneficial economic, health and safety aspects of traveling by passenger rail. However, to ensure the States and Amtrak can do this, federal assistance is needed. Furthermore, our members have billions of dollars of passenger rail capital improvements in the pipeline ready to move into final design and construction but require federal funding. These projects are detailed in the SPRC Projects in the Pipeline document, attached. Our members stand ready to work with you and the U.S. DOT to resume and increase intercity passenger rail services and deliver these important capital projects to move the economy forward.

We look forward to having the opportunity to meet with you and your leadership team to discuss the challenges and opportunities that will enhance passenger rail's pivotal role in the nation's transportation network.

Each year SPRC holds an Annual Meeting in February in Washington, DC. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we will hold the meeting "virtually" on Tuesday, February 16, 2021. We have confirmed the participation of Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Acting Administrator Amit Bose, along with other key FRA staff to during the meeting. If your schedule permits, we would be honored to have you also join us during this important event.

Once again, congratulations on your appointment. We offer our continuing support and reaffirm our commitment to work with our colleagues in the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), FRA, Amtrak, and all levels of state and local government to improve and expand passenger rail service.

Please contact me if you have any questions and we wish you all the success!

Best Regards,



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