

Statement of Jeremy Latimer, Chair of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC)

to the

Senate Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, & Related Agencies

Agency the testimony is addressing:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary and Federal Railroad Administration

On behalf of the 24 State and Regional Transportation Officials and Passenger Rail Authorities across the United States that are members of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC), I would like to thank you and your Committee colleagues for your leadership and commitment to intercity passenger rail. SPRC is an alliance of state and regional transportation officials who works together to promote the development and growth of Intercity Passenger Rail as part of an integrated national transportation network. Additionally, our Coalition members sponsor 29 intercity passenger rail (IPR) routes serving 296 communities across America and represent nearly half of Amtrak's national ridership. The members of SPRC include:

California	Missouri
Capitol Corridor	New Mexico
Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA)	New York
Colorado	North Carolina
Connecticut	Northern New England Passenger
Illinois	Rail Authority (NNEPRA)
Indiana	Oregon
Iowa	Pennsylvania
Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo	San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA)
Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN)	Vermont
Louisiana	Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA)
Massachusetts	Washington
Michigan	Wisconsin
Minnesota	

Intercity passenger rail is a key component of our Nation's transportation network and represents a safe, energy efficient, and economically beneficial transportation option. Each day, millions of passengers travel on regional and long-distance intercity passenger trains. SPRC member states and intercity passenger rail authorities are the primary entities responsible for the initiation, implementation, oversight and/or management of regional intercity passenger rail service outside of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. As Chair of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, I request the subcommittee consider the following as you work through the process of developing the FY2024 transportation spending bill:

- **Fully fund the rail provisions authorized in the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA),** including four IIJA discretionary programs:
 - Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) Grants,
 - Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grants,
 - Restoration and Enhancement Grants, and
 - Railroad Crossing Elimination Program.
- **Continue the merit-based National Infrastructure Project Assistance program, the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America program, and the Rural Surface Transportation Grant**

Program, which enable State and local governments to build critical multimodal and multi-jurisdictional projects, often in partnership with private contributions;

- **Continue investment in Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor (NEC)**, as it is a critical national transportation asset. The NEC provides well-documented economic benefits while providing a safe, environmentally friendly, efficient means of travel for more than 750,000 people on more than 2,200 passenger trains daily;
- **Continue investment in Amtrak’s National Network**, which supports both the national long-distance intercity passenger rail network and the existing 29 state-supported routes that the majority of SPRC member states sponsor. Sustained funding is needed to maintain and improve existing equipment and infrastructure, implement safety and security projects, invest in improvements that support faster, more frequent, and more reliable service, replace the aging fleet of locomotives and passenger rail cars, improve station accessibility under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- **Invest in the Corridor Identification and Development Grant Program** that guides the development of new and enhanced intercity passenger rail services to help bolster economic growth throughout the United States;
- **Providing the authorized funding levels to support the activities of the State-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee (SAIPRC)**, the state-supported route committee, which is leading the growth of the national intercity passenger rail system;
- **Providing new funding to continue the activities of the PRIIA Section 305 Next Generation Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC)**, to advance the development and maintenance of standardized next generation passenger rail equipment specifications. These specifications support lower operating and maintenance costs, extending vehicle life expectancy, and reinvigorating the U.S. Rail manufacturing and supply industry. The NGEC is critical to updating existing specifications and exploring emerging technologies (such as zero emission/climate friendly propulsion alternatives) for next generation specifications that cover the full spectrum of passenger rail services in the U.S.; and,
- **Fully fund the Federal Transit Administration’s Capital Investment Grant (CIG) Program**, commonly known as New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity, at the authorized level of \$3B.

SPRC advocates for federal formula funding of intercity passenger rail planning, project development, and construction activities, consistent with federal highway and transit funding programs. Dedicated federal funding will enable all states to more efficiently advance passenger rail projects to final design and construction. It will build institutional capacity at the state level to ensure all states are planning for freight and passenger rail improvements and can pursue federal discretionary grant opportunities.

SPRC has produced an extensive list of capital and planning projects to demonstrate the need for federal investment in intercity passenger rail with state partners. Together with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) last month, SPRC updated its list of passenger rail projects ready for final design and construction funds and a list of projects that are in the planning/scoping phase. This “Projects in the Pipeline” list identifies:

- **285 projects with total funding needs of \$74.1 billion.**
 - 179 projects ready or close to ready for final design or construction with a cost of \$41.7 billion
 - 106 planning and engineering projects with a funding need of \$32.4 billion.

If funded, these projects could result in over 100 additional daily intercity passenger rail round trips, serve nearly 50 new cities, put hundreds of new or refurbished locomotives and passenger rail cars in service, repair or replace deteriorating railroad bridges and structures, upgrade or close several hundred grade crossings, and make many other safety, capacity, and reliability improvements. These benefits not only

provide improvements for passenger rail but also for the nation's critical freight rail traffic. Descriptions for each of these projects can be found at <https://s4prc.org/projects/>.

SPRC understands that Congress has a responsibility to balance long-term infrastructure investment with scarce financial resources. As you move forward in advancing deliberations on the FFY2024 Transportation Housing and Urban Development Appropriation, the SPRC members stand ready to provide testimony and to meet with the Committee and your staff at your convenience.

Thank you for this opportunity and please let us know if you have any questions or would like us to elaborate further on our testimony as you work through the appropriations process.

Respectfully,

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