



RAIL PASSENGERS
ASSOCIATION



Support, Connection, Advocacy



October 4th, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker, Chairwoman Lowey, and Chairman DeFazio:

As leaders of groups representing 40 million rail passengers in the U.S., 17,500 Amtrak workers, thousands of Commuter and Transit employees, and close to 125,000 railway suppliers, we are writing to remind Congress not to forget about the other pieces of America’s national intercity transportation network: Amtrak and public transit systems.

Airlines undoubtedly play an important role in our nation’s transportation network and economy, and our members support your efforts to shore up airlines and air travel. However, airlines are not the only part of our nation’s transportation system, nor are they the only transportation modes in need of significant financial assistance. October 1st marked the beginning of drastic service reductions for Amtrak and thousands of furloughs for its workforce, while many of our nation’s transit systems are in varying states of financial duress.

Amtrak employs roughly 17,500 people and serves over 500 communities— not just big cities but small towns with few transportation alternatives. A recent Rail Passengers economic analysis found that Amtrak’s long-distance network alone generates \$4.8 billion in economic benefits to the U.S., which are widely distributed throughout America’s heartland. And that does not even include additional billions generated by the State-supported trains or our nation’s economic aorta, the Northeast Corridor.

Moreover, public transit is an essential *daily* service for everyday Americans, with New York’s MTA carrying more passengers each day than all U.S. airlines combined. Both these essential systems will collapse without congressional intervention, and we urge you to include the funding and service protections for passenger rail and transit which were included in H.R. 925.

Finally, ensuring that the federal government includes aid to public transportation and Amtrak to help offset the substantial costs and lost revenues related to COVID-19, is critical to maintaining the manufacturing and supply chain and ensure the continuation of essential maintenance, repair and equipment refurbishment or acquisitions. Most importantly, this action will help limit the enormous economic damage caused by the pandemic.

As we write this, thousands of workers at Amtrak are already being furloughed, transit systems are on the brink of financial ruin, drastic service cuts are being exacted upon the public, and the domestic rail supply manufacturing chain is being eroded. We therefore urge you to include Amtrak and transit as part and parcel of a national intercity transportation aid package.

We remain grateful for your continued support for railroaders, their families, the riding public, and the countless jobs that rely on a functioning transportation network.

With Best Wishes,

Jim Mathews
President & Chief Executive Officer
Rail Passengers Association

Arthur Maratea
National President
Transportation Communications Union
(TCU/IAM)

Nicole Brewin
Vice President
Government & Pub. Affairs
Railway Supply Institute

Dennis Pierce
President
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers
& Trainmen (BLET-Teamsters)

Jeremy Ferguson
President
SMART - Transportation Division