



"A National Passenger Rail Network or Nothing" said Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison. She was talking about more than just principles.

The North East Corridor has at least a \$38 billion-dollar maintenance backlog. By necessity, this is a project of Federal scope, requiring buy-in from states outside of the Corridor. Currently, Amtrak has a large bipartisan coalition of support at a truly national scale. However, that coalition is now under threat.

The Rail Passengers Association is working to oppose an Amtrak proposal to substitute bus service along the Southwest Chief route in Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico. To maintain the service, these three states invested over \$9 million in state funds based upon an explicit agreement between Amtrak-served communities, BNSF Railroad, and until recently, Amtrak. Amtrak recently blocked the grant by renegeing its promised match, throwing away \$22 million in outside funds to "save" \$3 million. Worse yet, Amtrak did not announce the proposal until those state legislatures had already adjourned for the year.

With the agreement will go those stakeholders, and part of Amtrak's national coalition. RPA staff is working with Congress, and we are currently creating a corridor-wide campaign to activate mayors, local officials, and citizens in defense of this rail service. There are two simple things that you can do today that would help us immeasurably:

1) Sign our Amtrak Communities Petition at www.railpassengers.org/mayors

- a. *"In light of record public investment in passenger rail and recent actions by Amtrak management affecting National Network service, we the undersigned, call upon Amtrak to report to Congress and Amtrak-served communities how it will invest these funds to ensure continued, high-quality service to all towns on the national rail system, and how your organization will alter your long-term service line plans"*

2) Phone your Federal Representative and ask that the House:

- a. **Maintain the levels of funding for passenger rail approved by the Senate and House transportation committees (H.R. 6147).**
 - i. Support the improved levels of funding for passenger rail and transit passed in both the House and the Senate versions.
- b. **Keep the Moran/Udall amendment language as it is; do not let it get watered down in conference.**
 - i. This language requires Amtrak to retain existing service levels on its national network, including the entirety of the Southwest Chief Route (the Moran/Udall Amendment).
- c. **Require Amtrak to honor all Federal Railroad Administration Positive Train Control exemptions.**
 - i. Amtrak management's decision to ignore these exemptions unnecessarily threatens the Southwest Chief, but also sets a precedent that threatens seven other routes in question including: the Cardinal, California Zephyr, Texas Eagle, Downeaster, Vermonter, Ethan Allen, and City of New Orleans.
 - ii. The FRA, as the experts in rail safety, should be the final arbiter for the level of safety systems applied to each route that hosts passenger trains, and operators should honor their recommendations.

1967



1990



2011



2017



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