



The future of Amtrak's national network is still uncertain. Amtrak's new leadership seems to be operating with the understanding that it must cut its way into cost-efficiency, starting with cutting the Southwest Chief in half with a 10-hour bus bridge.

Of course, we know these cuts will only result in a loss of riders and revenue, negating any savings. Using concepts developed by the Volpe Transportation Center for Amtrak in 2009, we calculate as much as 80% of the costs that Amtrak allocates to the Chief may represent fixed costs for shared facilities and overhead, which would simply make every other train in the system look worse.

We have to ensure Congress sending a clear message to Amtrak, written in the language of dollars and cents: run more trains, not fewer. 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, that would help us immeasurably:

**1) Sign our Amtrak Communities Petition at [www.railpassengers.org/mayors](http://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



**RAIL PASSENGERS**  
ASSOCIATION