



July 23, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

As senators representing states along the Northeast Corridor (NEC), we urge you to include substantial funding to protect Amtrak's capital funding, especially for crucial projects on the NEC—the busiest passenger rail corridor in North America. This funding would also serve to protect Amtrak's workforce, nationwide service, and other critical projects. Without this funding, Amtrak will have to take additional dire measures that could impact the NEC and our only nationwide passenger rail system for years.

We are particularly concerned that without substantial additional federal support, Amtrak's critical capital program on the NEC could be affected. Prior to the pandemic, the 457-mile NEC rail network between Washington, D.C. and Boston Massachusetts provided 750,000 trips each day serving a workforce that contributes more than \$50 billion annually to the national economy. However, the NEC needs significant upgrades as crucial segments are at or near capacity and portions of the rail line are over a century old. Amtrak and the NEC states have been working for years to reserve funding to address the critical backlog of projects, which will create thousands of good-paying jobs and improve the performance of the corridor. Whether it's a state of good repair project to improve Penn Station, an Americans with Disabilities Act compliance project, new Acela trainsets, or much-needed upgrades to ensure service reliability, these projects are critical to the continued success of Amtrak and all the commuter rail service that operates on the NEC.

Further, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and a reduction in ridership, Amtrak is planning significant service and workforce reductions. Amtrak has proposed offsetting revenue losses by reducing operating costs by approximately \$500 million in FY 2021. With ridership continuing to plummet, the financial situation of Amtrak will continue to worsen with potentially disastrous outcomes for the workforce and for service.

Through the passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Congress took decisive action to support Amtrak service that benefitted the entire system. At the time, we had hoped that the impacts of the pandemic would be relatively short-lived. Now that the long-term implications of the pandemic are clearer, we must again act to preserve our nation's passenger rail service. Amtrak has said it needs an additional \$1.475 billion in supplemental funding for FY 2021 just to maintain minimum service levels across the network,

but that level puts essential NEC capital projects at risk and does not ensure the preservation of the workforce or network. The fiscal year 2021 House appropriations bill includes \$10 billion for Amtrak, including \$2.05 billion for 2021 and an additional \$8 billion in emergency infrastructure investment. The House bill also includes protections to prevent furloughs and maintain nationwide service.

Given the considerable impacts of COVID-19, we urge significant funding at a level that protects Amtrak's capital program and the critical NEC projects it funds.

Sincerely,

Senator Christopher S. Murphy
Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.
Senator Chris Van Hollen
Senator Elizabeth Warren
Senator Christopher A. Coons
Senator Robert Menendez

Senator Richard Blumenthal
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
Senator Edward J. Markey
Senator Benjamin L. Cardin
Senator Cory A. Booker