

William J. Flynn
Chief Executive Officer



January 22, 2021

Dear Member of Congress,

In 2021, we celebrate our 50th anniversary as America's Railroad, created by Congress to provide intercity passenger rail service throughout the nation. As Amtrak's new CEO, I look forward to working with you during the 117th Congress to recover from the pandemic and improve and expand efficient and sustainable service to communities all across America. Below are Amtrak's top five priorities that we ask Congress to address:

- **Sufficient Funding:** Amtrak requires additional COVID relief funding to sustain and restore operations and recall employees through the remainder of FY21 and into FY22 and beyond. In the coming weeks, we are requesting \$1.541 billion in FY21 and will outline our FY22 needs in our annual Legislative and Grant Request.
- **Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund:** Amtrak and intercity passenger rail are the only mode of surface transportation without a federal trust fund to provide reliable, multiyear program funding. Reliance solely on the annual appropriations process for funding inhibits our ability to pursue large, multi-year capital projects or procurements and service expansion across the nation. If Amtrak is to significantly improve and expand our network, Congress must create a predictable and long-term source of federal funding, like a trust fund, for both the Northeast Corridor and the National Network.
- **Access to Railroads for New Service and Adding Trains:** Most rail routes used by Amtrak trains are owned and controlled by freight railroads. Prompt access to the nation's rail network is essential for Amtrak to fulfill its mission and meet the needs of the traveling public. Amtrak always attempts to work cooperatively with our host railroads to add new routes, modify existing routes, and add additional trains. More often than not, these efforts fail to provide reasonable access for Amtrak trains, leaving your constituents without the services they desire and deserve. We are seeking Congressional support and updates to statute to ensure the Amtrak network can grow and serve more of your constituents.
- **Preference Enforcement:** Our host railroads are required by law to provide Amtrak trains dispatching preference over their own freight trains. Unfortunately, this requirement is not consistently honored and "freight train interference" is the largest source of delay to Amtrak trains on host railroads, inconveniencing passengers in violation of the law. Amtrak seeks the right to bring an action in U.S. District Court when our preference right is violated so we can ensure our customers are not unnecessarily delayed by freight trains and arrive on-time.



- **New Routes:** Frequent and reliable “corridor” routes, typically less than 500 miles, represent the fastest-growing segment of Amtrak service. Population growth, changing demographics and travel preferences, and environmental concerns all point to new opportunities for intercity passenger rail, and we have developed a visionary plan to expand service across the nation. We ask Congress to authorize and fund Amtrak’s expansion in such corridors by allowing us to cover most of the initial capital and operating costs of new or expanded routes prior to requiring state partner cost-sharing under Sec. 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act.

We appreciate your support and are excited about better serving your constituents. If you would like to learn how to bring more and better Amtrak service to your state/district, please contact Amtrak Government Affairs at: governmentaffairsdc@amtrak.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Flynn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bill Flynn
Chief Executive Officer