

Amtrak Applies for Federal Grants to Improve Long Distance Network

Proposals would upgrade existing routes and add new service

WASHINGTON – Amtrak has submitted applications for approximately \$716 million in Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) funding for 16 proposed projects around the country that would improve Long Distance reliability, reduce travel times and expand service.

“Amtrak’s Long Distance routes are vital mobility and economic links for communities around the country and we’re continually working to enhance them,” said [Amtrak Board Chair Tony Coscia](#). “These grant applications reiterate our commitment to improving service for all Amtrak customers, from small, rural towns to major metropolitan areas.”

The applications were submitted through two FRA programs funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), including the [Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program](#) funding opportunity for projects outside the Northeast Corridor and the [Corridor Identification and Development Program](#) (Corridor ID Program).

Example Long Distance projects include:

- Multiple *Cardinal* and *Sunset Limited* service improvements
 - Increase service to operate daily – up from 3x/week currently (Corridor ID Program)
 - Increase *Cardinal* train speeds and reduce travel times between Indianapolis and Dyer, Ind.
 - *Sunset Limited* return to Phoenix
- *Southwest Chief* signal modernization between Colorado and New Mexico
- *Empire Builder* rail enhancements in Montana
- I-20 *Crescent* service extension from Mississippi through Louisiana to Texas
- Construction of new Crystal City station that would add service to Arlington, Va.

In addition to these Long Distance grant applications submitted in conjunction with various partners, Amtrak also applied for several grants to improve Northeast Corridor and State Supported routes and provided letters of support for 83 projects outside the Northeast Corridor submitted by others.

REACTIONS

Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA)

“This investment from the infrastructure law will connect Louisiana’s I-20 corridor with Atlanta and Dallas. It strengthens north Louisiana cities by better integration into interstate commerce.”

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Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)

“Access to West Virginia through rail has been a crucial aspect of our infrastructure, and a key component in providing travel opportunities for West Virginians and bringing new individuals to visit our state. The *Cardinal* line is a great example of that, providing West Virginia with important connections from Chicago to Washington, Philadelphia, and New York. I am glad to see that funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which I helped negotiate and include, could lead to service increases, something for which I have long advocated.”

Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM)

“Whether it’s connecting communities from Raton, Las Vegas, or Lamy or bringing thousands of Scouts every summer to the Philmont Scout Ranch, Amtrak’s *Southwest Chief* is essential to New Mexico. Vital infrastructure investments like train signal modernization will go a long way toward ensuring the long-term viability of this important long-distance passenger rail line so it will keep running for generations to come.”

Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA)

“Rail service is crucial to so many Virginians—helping them access job opportunities and stay connected with loved ones. I’m proud of steps we’ve been able to take together, including passing my *Long Bridge Act* and the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, that have helped pave the way for Amtrak to come to Crystal City. I’m going to keep working to finish the job and to find other opportunities to support expanded rail service across the Commonwealth.”

Senator Mark Kelly (D-AZ)

“Phoenix is the largest city in the country not served by Amtrak, but thanks to our Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we’re working to fix that. This support for the Return to Phoenix Project will finally bring together Arizona communities, the railroads, and Amtrak to develop a comprehensive plan to connect Phoenix and Tucson with passenger rail and connect Phoenix to Amtrak’s nationwide network.”

Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV)

“I applaud Amtrak for seeking infrastructure funding to restore daily service on the *Cardinal* line that travels through the Mountain State. This is a great step in connecting West Virginia communities, bringing more visitors to our great State, and creating new economic opportunities. Thanks to my work in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we are now one step closer to implementing daily service on the *Cardinal* line. I am committed to seeing daily rail service in Charleston, Huntington, the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, and the many communities along the *Cardinal* line and will continue to work to see West Virginia get the daily passenger rail service it deserves.”

Senator Jon Tester (D-MT)

“As someone who’s spent my entire life farming in north central Montana, I know just how critical the *Empire Builder* is to families and small businesses along the Hi-Line. Long distance passenger rail helps to keep Montana connected, and improvements to the *Empire Builder* will help to keep rural America strong as we work to improve economic opportunities across the Treasure State. I’m happy to see Amtrak prioritizing passenger rail in places like Montana, and I’ll continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure these critical programs are adequately funded.”

Senator Mark Warner (D-VA)

“Bringing Amtrak services to Crystal City would provide Virginians with efficient, cost effective travel throughout the country. I am excited about the possibility of moving this project forward and will continue to do everything I can to make sure Virginia’s application is considered.”

Congressman Colin Allred (D-TX-32)

“As Texas continues to grow, we need more transportation options to give folks the flexibility they need to travel and connect our communities. This funding was made possible thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which I proudly helped pass. I support this project because building long-distance rail along the I-20 corridor will benefit folks from Dallas to Longview and all the way to Louisiana – all while helping to grow our economy.”

Congressman André Carson (D-IN-07)

“This funding will help shape a Midwest that is better connected than ever before. By cutting travel time between Indianapolis and Chicago, more Hoosiers will be able to reach their destinations safely and efficiently, all while reducing congestion on roadways. Year after year, I’ve requested increased funds to maintain and improve services across the National Network, including the *Cardinal* line. I’ll continue to advocate for a stronger, faster rail system to link communities across the country.”

Congressman Troy A. Carter, Sr. (D-LA-02)

“Transit and passenger rail are key to connecting metropolitan hubs, small towns, and communities all over the country. The improvements made in Louisiana because of these grants will increase reliability, expand service, and provide overall enhancements. Full steam ahead!”

Congressman Nathaniel Moran (R-TX-01)

“This infrastructure will set the groundwork towards revitalizing historic downtowns across the First District of Texas and catalyzing local economic development, while expanding opportunities in these communities. Thank you to Amtrak for their support and recognition of the need to expand much-needed transit across East Texas through the I-20 Passenger Rail Corridor project.”

Congressman Greg Stanton (D-AZ-04)

“Phoenix is the largest city in the country without passenger rail service. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided historic funding for Amtrak—now is the time to seize on this investment, creating new economic opportunities and reducing congestion and emissions on our highways.”

Louisiana Multimodal Commissioner Renee Lapeyrolerie

“The unprecedented federal investment, working in partnership with Amtrak and with other states, are the forward steps needed to expand passenger rail in our region. In addition to expanding access to job opportunities for Louisiana’s workforce, passenger rail allows us to abate vehicular traffic congestion and carbon emissions.”

City of Kissimmee City Manager Mike Steigerwald

“For the City of Kissimmee investing in our infrastructure is a priority. Thanks to Amtrak our residents can cross states and connect across the country. Having an environmentally responsible and reliable form of transportation is something we look forward to. So, knowing there’s a possibility to expand and upgrade those railroad services is something we support 100%.”

City of Trinidad City Manager Steve Ruger

“We are proud to partner with Amtrak in applying for the *Southwest Chief* Signal Modernization grant. This crucial initiative not only enhances a vibrant alternative for transportation to Trinidad and beyond, but also anchors the safety and reliability that our community deserves. This venture represents our commitment to Amtrak's ongoing success and the enriched connectivity of our community.”

Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority Chairman Dave Strohmaier

“The Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority is delighted to serve as a joint applicant with Amtrak to secure Federal-State Partnership dollars for critical infrastructure in northern Montana. These investments along Montana's “Hi-Line” will not only improve Empire Builder operations (rippling out across the entire route), but also benefit freight rail and, ultimately, set us up for success in expanding the long-distance national network across the Greater Northwest Region of America.”

Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission Director Laura Kliewer

“The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) is proud to be a co-applicant with Amtrak on a federal application to service the Midwest's state-owned locomotives, and to have Amtrak partner with us on MIPRC's CRISI grant application to further region-wide planning. The commission steadfastly supports Amtrak's daily long-distance service, which serves many urban and rural communities across the Midwest, and also provides the backbone for additional state-supported services. We applaud Amtrak for pursuing improvements to long-distance lines, as well as their plan to restore daily *Cardinal* service, a long-sought goal of our member states that the IIJA could make possible.”

Southern Rail Commission Chairman Knox Ross

“The Southern Rail Commission is pleased to partner with Amtrak and the Louisiana and Mississippi Departments of Transportation as a part of a Federal/State Partnership application to begin the work to implement Amtrak service on the I-20 Corridor. The SRC and its partner cities on the corridor are excited about the potential of connecting our unique offerings of culture and opportunity with the rest of the country. Amtrak's historic commitment to studying this service is a significant first step in making that connection a reality.”

Rail Passengers Association President & CEO Jim Mathews

“From the proposal to bring daily service to the *Sunset Limited* and *Cardinal* to the exciting prospect of new service across the U.S. Southeast, these are vital and long-overdue investments in a connected America. Every dollar the IIJA invests in passenger rail creates a return on taxpayers' equity, delivering many multiples in annual economic benefits to the communities where these new and improved services will run. These interstate corridors connect small towns and big cities alike, and we applaud Amtrak's grant requests and their

efforts to ensure that the 62 million people who live in rural America—a quarter of whom are veterans and another quarter who are seniors—aren't left behind.”

About Amtrak®

For more than 50 years, Amtrak has connected America and modernized train travel. Offering a safe, environmentally efficient way to reach more than 500 destinations across 46 states and parts of Canada, Amtrak provides travelers with an experience that sets a new standard. Book travel, check train status, access your eTicket and more through the [Amtrak app](#). Learn more at [Amtrak.com](#) and connect with us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About Amtrak's Historic Infrastructure Investments

Amtrak is leading a new era of passenger rail, investing in modern trains, enhanced stations, new tunnels and bridges, and other critical infrastructure upgrades. We're enhancing the customer experience across the country, improving safety and reliability, driving economic development, reducing trip times, expanding capacity, advancing accessibility and promoting a more sustainable future.

Traditionally known as a passenger rail operator, today Amtrak is also a major construction company executing the largest capital program in Amtrak's history. With over \$50 billion of capital investments in planning and development, these historic investments are made possible by the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) enacted in 2021.

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