

Testimony of  
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“Investing in Our Nation’s Transportation Infrastructure and  
Workers: Why it Matters”

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Good morning, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and Members of this Committee. My name is Stephen Gardner, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Amtrak. Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to describe how Amtrak is emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, in no small part due to the funding provided in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and how we are utilizing the unprecedented levels of funding the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provides for vital investments that will improve and expand our service throughout the United States while creating thousands of skilled, well-paying jobs.

I'd like to begin my testimony by expressing Amtrak's gratitude to each of you – and especially to Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and Railroads Subcommittee Chairman Payne and Ranking Member Crawford – for the interest in and support for Amtrak you have demonstrated during the soon to conclude 117th Congress, which produced two of the most important pieces of legislation in our 51-year history: ARPA and the IIJA. We are particularly grateful to Chairman DeFazio for his consistent dedication to improving intercity passenger rail service and Amtrak during the 36 years he has served in the House of Representatives, and we are pleased that he ends his time in Congress on such a high note.

### **The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Pandemic Recovery**

ARPA, enacted in March of 2021, provided desperately needed emergency funding to Amtrak at a terrible time. Our ridership and ticket revenues were nearly 75% below pre-pandemic levels. No one knew then when, or to what extent, travel demand would return. We were dramatically reducing expenses but still burning through the previous emergency CARES Act funding and appropriations Congress had provided to keep us afloat, while struggling to provide service during a pandemic for those who needed to travel. ARPA funding allowed us to maintain the reduced levels of service we were operating on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and state-supported routes, and to restore our long-distance trains to daily operation.

Most importantly, ARPA funding enabled us to preserve our most important asset: our workforce. With the funding ARPA provided, we were able to recall all of the workers we had to furlough indefinitely in October of 2020 because we did not have enough money to pay them. Fortunately, the vast majority of them returned to Amtrak employment. Among train and engine crews, 96% of furloughed engineers and 91% of

furloughed conductors returned: only five engineers and 32 conductors did not come back (we did not furlough any Mechanical or Engineering employees).

Additionally, the ARPA funds allowed us to restart our hiring and training pipeline that we had suspended at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic because of the challenges of training new employees during a pandemic and uncertainty regarding federal funding. Once we received ARPA funding and recalled our employees, we were able to restart this work, which gave us a path to sufficient staffing when travel demand returned. Because it takes so long to train employees for our most-skilled positions, the ability to resume hiring and training last year was absolutely critical to our recovery during FY 2022 and will be very instrumental in our plans for FY 2023. I shudder to think of where we would be today without the funding ARPA provided that enabled us to perform these vital activities.

Thanks to ARPA and the hard work of our employees during the most challenging time in Amtrak's history, we are experiencing a strong recovery from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. During August, we carried more than 2.3 million passengers, nearly 80% of our August 2019 ridership, and our ticket revenues were almost 90% of August 2019 levels. What is particularly noteworthy is that our capacity is only 82% of what it was in August 2019, which means that we're actually filling about the same percentage of available seats that we did then. Ridership on our Virginia state-supported services reached an all-time high for the second consecutive month; our *Northeast Regional* service is approaching pre-pandemic ridership levels despite reduced capacity; and our long-distance trains are achieving near record revenues as domestic tourism and desire for private rooms have increased.

These gains have come as a result of hard work by the great team at Amtrak and our state partners, who have had to rethink many of our business and commercial strategies in the face of very different travel needs and a constantly shifting landscape. We have utilized a variety of different marketing and pricing approaches during this period to support business recovery, many of which have been very successful. These strategies have helped us attract many customers who are new to Amtrak, and more leisure travelers on *Acela* trains to replace business travelers who are not traveling at pre-pandemic levels. That development is very timely because our new *Acela* trainsets, which will begin entering service next year, will increase our *Acela* capacity by about 75%. That will give

us the opportunity to carry many more passengers on our *Acela* trains, which for many years have not had enough seats to meet demand.

## **The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**

While the American Rescue Plan enabled Amtrak to survive, the IIJA is providing the funding that will allow us to thrive.

The IIJA provides \$58 billion in advance appropriations for investments in Amtrak and intercity passenger rail. It also appropriates or authorizes significant additional funding for Amtrak and for competitive grant programs for which Amtrak projects are eligible. The IIJA's funding represents the down payment on the expansion and improvement of service that Amtrak and its stakeholders have dreamed of since Amtrak's inception in 1971, but never had the funding to pursue.

Amtrak passengers will not be the only beneficiaries of the IIJA. It will produce thousands of jobs, both within Amtrak and for the suppliers and contractors who will provide many billions of dollars in goods and services required for IIJA-funded projects. The IIJA will enhance communities small and large throughout the United States that will benefit from the new and expanded Amtrak service it will produce, and the station and other infrastructure projects it will fund that will spur local development. Furthermore, the IIJA will help address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by allowing more travelers to use rail, the sustainable transportation mode.

Amtrak and its state and commuter partners were ready for the opportunities the IIJA has given us. Just prior to its enactment, Amtrak created a new Capital Delivery Department that will be responsible for carrying out IIJA-funded infrastructure and equipment projects. We are staffing it with Amtrak employees experienced in delivering railroad capital projects and rail and construction industry leaders from outside the company attracted by the once-in-a-generation opportunities the IIJA will create.

Amtrak and our partners were also well prepared for participation in the NEC Project Pipeline and the Corridor Identification and Development Program the IIJA establishes, which create Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)-led frameworks for prioritizing, advancing and funding capital projects that intercity passenger rail has lacked. Working with other stakeholders, we developed a long-term capital investment plan, the NEC

Commission's 15-year CONNECT NEC 2035 plan released last year, which is currently being updated, that will inform our participation in the development of the NEC Project Pipeline. Amtrak and our partners also advanced pre-construction activities for key projects so they would be ready to go when funding for construction became available.

Amtrak was also prepared for the expansion of our network that the IIJA contemplates. In April of 2021 we issued Amtrak Connects US, Amtrak's 15-year vision for corridor development that would bring service to 160 new communities, attract 20 million more passengers annually, and produce 26,000 permanent jobs. The response we received from states and communities throughout the United States far exceeded our expectations. Many of them have been working with us to advance proposed new or expanded Amtrak service.

### **Advancing Infrastructure Investments with the IIJA**

When I testified before the Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee last December, I described our initial plans to use the funding the IIJA provides. I would like to take this opportunity to bring you up to date on what we have accomplished since then, and to briefly describe some of the things we will be focusing on in the months ahead.

I am pleased to report that several of the major capital projects that will utilize IIJA funding provided by Amtrak or through competitive grants are moving forward. These projects are already creating jobs for both Amtrak employees and contractors and contributing to our nation's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In August, Amtrak participated in the groundbreaking for the construction of the Portal North Bridge. That New Jersey Transit-led project is the first of the major rail infrastructure projects between Newark and New York City included in the Gateway Program. Construction of the new bridge is projected to create approximately 15,000 jobs and add billions of dollars to the local economy.

Thanks to the enactment of the IIJA, the Gateway Program, including the Hudson Tunnel Project that many have characterized as the most important infrastructure program in the United States, is going to happen. I'm pleased to report that the Gateway Development Commission, led by new CEO Kris Kolluri, recently assumed the role of Project Sponsor

for the Hudson Tunnel Project. With the full engagement of the Governors of New York and New Jersey, the project partners are accelerating towards a full funding grant agreement that will finally allow construction to begin.

Enactment of the IIJA has allowed Amtrak to launch the procurement phase of the B&P Tunnel Replacement Project. It will replace the B&P Tunnel in Baltimore – a nearly 150-year-old bottleneck through which *Acelas* crawl at 30 miles per hour – with the new Frederick Douglass Tunnel. Recent Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair (Fed-State Partnership) grants to Amtrak and the Connecticut Department of Transportation will help fund the replacement of two ancient bridges along the NEC in Connecticut: the Connecticut River Bridge between Old Saybrook and Old Lyme, and the Walk Bridge in Norwalk. Amtrak expects to use funding provided by the IIJA to cover costs of these projects.

We are also moving ahead with our Major Station Amtrak Development Programs for which we also expect to use IIJA funds. We recently commenced construction on the rehabilitation of Baltimore Penn Station, a project that will be transformative for both Amtrak and MARC passengers and the surrounding community. In New York City, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Amtrak, and New Jersey Transit have just selected a joint venture to design an equally transformative and much larger project: the reconstruction of New York Penn Station. That project, along with track and platform expansion under the Gateway Program, will transform Penn Station into a world-class facility with much needed capacity for more passengers and trains.

We are continuing to advance Major Station Amtrak Development Programs at other stations. At William H. Gray III 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station in Philadelphia, construction for state of good repair and station retail projects is scheduled to begin early next year. At Washington Union Station, we have begun construction on several near-term state-of-good-repair, safety, and platform capacity expansion projects, including restoration of an unused platform for revenue service, and will soon begin reconfiguration of Amtrak facilities located next to the tracks on the west side of the terminal.

By providing assured, multi-year funding that Amtrak can commit to match local government, transit agency, and private sector investments, the IIJA will allow us to pursue opportunities for public-private partnerships for station development projects. Likewise, the knowledge that there will be federal funding available to match state

investments in intercity passenger rail projects encourages states to expend resources to develop plans for rail projects, as they have long done for highway and mass transit projects.

The IIJA will also create a multitude of new opportunities for Amtrak to contract with small businesses and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) to provide goods and services for IIJA-funded projects. In anticipation of this, we have increased staffing in our Supplier Diversity Office, are providing internal training on identifying and using diverse suppliers for Amtrak employees involved in procurements, and have hosted or participated in more than 30 supplier outreach events throughout the country during the past year. We also recently opened a Small Business Resource Center in Philadelphia that provides networking, technical assistance and training opportunities for diverse suppliers and small businesses.

### **Pursuing IIJA Competitive Grants**

Over the past few months, FRA has awarded a number of grants, funded by FY 2021 appropriations, to Amtrak and its state partners under the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvements (CRISI) and Fed-State Partnership programs. These grants will fund pre-construction activities such as preliminary engineering, design and environmental reviews, and initial construction work, for key infrastructure projects, preparing them for construction when funding is provided. Among the NEC projects receiving such grants are the replacement of the Sawtooth Bridge in New Jersey, a component of the Gateway Program; the Susquehanna River Bridge replacement in Maryland; and the East River Tunnel Rehabilitation project and the Pelham Bay Bridge Replacement project in New York City.

Two very important National Network projects received Fed-State Partnership grants for pre-construction activities. One is for the design of concourse improvements at Chicago Union Station (CUS). The other, a \$57.9 million grant that Amtrak and North Carolina are matching, will fund preliminary engineering and initial construction work on the North Carolina portion of the Petersburg, Virginia to Raleigh, North Carolina S-Line, furthering a project that will provide a direct connection along the federally designated Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor between Virginia's and North Carolina's growing state-supported services.

The substantial, multi-year funding provided by the IIJA is what will transform each of these projects from construction drawings into reality. Over the next few years, they will be eligible for CRISI, the Fed-State Partnership program that the IIJA has expanded, and other competitive grants. The IIJA provides major increases in funding for these programs in FY 2022 through FY 2026, including \$7.2 billion in each year for Fed-State Partnership grants and \$1.5 billion annually for CRISI grants, and authorizes additional appropriations. The \$22 billion in advance appropriations to Amtrak and the \$39 billion in new funding for public transit that the IIJA provides will also help Amtrak and its commuter partners provide funding for these and other transformative projects, the need for which has long been recognized, that are at last coming to fruition as a result of the IIJA.

Amtrak is already pursuing IIJA-funded grants. Amtrak, the City of Chicago, Metra, and the Illinois and Michigan Departments of Transportation recently applied for an FY 2022 Mega grant for CUS, the hub of Amtrak's long-distance network and Midwest state-supported services. The grant would fund a portion of a \$418 million project that would provide a faster and more direct access route to CUS for four Amtrak routes; convert an unused mail platform at CUS into the station's first high-level passenger platform to accommodate increased train operations and provide better accessibility; improve Amtrak and Metra passenger flows within the often-congested station; and add 16 miles of second track along the Amtrak-owned Michigan Line served by Amtrak's state-supported Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac and Chicago-Port Huron trains. Amtrak and its state partners also intend to apply for multiple FY 2022 CRISI grants for which FRA recently issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity.

### **Acquiring New Equipment**

IIJA funding is allowing Amtrak to advance and accelerate plans to acquire new equipment to replace locomotives and cars, some of which are approaching 50 years old, that have reached the end of their useful lives.

- Following enactment of the IIJA, we exercised an option for 50 additional ALC-42 locomotives for long distance service.
- IIJA funding will be used for the new Intercity Trainsets, for which we awarded a contract last year, that will replace the Amfleet I cars operating on *Northeast*

*Regional* and other Northeast Corridor and Eastern corridor services, and will also reequip Amtrak Cascades service in the Pacific Northwest.

- We recently commenced the refurbishment of the 450 bi-level Superliner cars and single-level Viewliner I sleeping cars used on our long-distance trains.
- We are developing design specifications and customer requirements for new long-distance equipment in preparation for initiating a formal procurement process to replace the vintage equipment in our long-distance fleet.

New equipment acquisitions will also create thousands of jobs throughout the United States. By way of illustration, the construction of our new *Acela* trainsets by Alstom in Hornell, New York has created 400 direct jobs at Alstom and more than 1,300 new jobs at 170 suppliers across 29 states and 90 cities.

As we acquire new equipment, we will also be using IIJA funds to construct, upgrade and expand equipment maintenance facilities to accommodate our expanded equipment fleet and facilitate adoption of best practices in equipment maintenance. The new and improved facilities will make our operations more efficient, and their construction will create additional jobs.

### **Enhancing Accessibility**

IIJA funding provided is also fueling our efforts to bring all of our stations into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), on which we plan to spend \$1.1 billion over the next six years. We have completed ADA work at 173 stations and have over 250 more ADA projects in design or construction around the country.

Within the last few months, we have completed ADA improvements at:

- The Westerly, Rhode Island station on the Northeast Corridor in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation;
- Ashland, Virginia, which is served by our state-supported Virginia services in partnership with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority; Macomb, Illinois on the state-supported *Illinois Zephyr/Carl Sandburg* routes; and Effingham, Illinois on the state-supported *Illini/Saluki* and *City of New Orleans* long-distance routes; and
- Five other stations on long-distance routes: Hutchinson and Dodge City, Kansas on our *Southwest Chief* route; Greenwood, Mississippi on the *City of New Orleans*

route; Longview, Texas on the *Texas Eagle* route; and Crawfordsville, Indiana on the *Cardinal* route.

In addition:

- We have begun construction of an additional accessible entrance at New York Penn Station that is being funded by a unique public-private partnership with the owner of the office building above the station; and
- Amtrak is contributing funding for new ADA-compliant stations at Windsor Locks Connecticut, Coatesville, Pennsylvania and Newark, Delaware that are being constructed by the Departments of Transportation of those states and will serve Amtrak and commuter rail passengers.

While enhancing accessibility is what drives our ADA station projects, every one of them also produces many other significant public benefits. They create well-paid construction jobs, as well as jobs at companies that supply materials and components for station construction projects in both the local community where the station is located and throughout the country. The improvements in facilities these station projects include, such as new platforms, improved restrooms and waiting areas, and Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS), enhance the station experience for all our customers.

### **Adding New Services**

Over the past few months, we have added several new, extended or expanded state-supported corridor services, and advanced plans for others, that will utilize the on-order IIJA-funded Intercity Trainsets when they are delivered and/or IIJA funding for infrastructure.

- In July, we initiated two new state-supported services: the extension of the existing New York City to Rutland *Ethan Allen* to Burlington, Vermont and a seasonal weekend service from New York City to Pittsfield, Massachusetts.
- In partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia, we recently began operating additional trains from Washington to Norfolk and Roanoke. This service expansion, which created many additional engineer and conductor jobs, is the first of many service additions that will result from the groundbreaking agreement

Amtrak and Virginia reached with CSX last year that will transform Virginia's passenger rail service. Amtrak and Virginia plan to pursue IIJA-funded grants for projects that agreement will make possible.

- We recently reached an agreement with host railroad Canadian Pacific for their support of the operation of new trains from Chicago to Milwaukee and St. Paul and on a new route from New Orleans to Baton Rouge.
- We are eagerly awaiting a decision by the Surface Transportation Board that would allow restoration of service along the Gulf Coast between New Orleans and Mobile, which we have not served since Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

We look forward to working with FRA and our state partners to initiate the Corridor ID Program created by the IIJA. Already, states, regional transportation authorities, cities and other entities have submitted expressions of interest to FRA for inclusion of approximately 50 corridors in the Corridor ID Program. What is particularly encouraging is that enactment of the IIJA has triggered strong interest in developing Amtrak service in states such as Georgia, Idaho, Kansas and Colorado, and in places like Western Massachusetts and Reading/Berks County, Pennsylvania, where there is not a history of state funding support and Amtrak has little or no service today.

The IIJA also directs FRA to undertake a two-year study, in consultation with Amtrak, states, host railroads and other stakeholders, of increasing service frequency on, restoring, and adding long distance routes. Here again, we have already seen a great deal of interest in restored or new Amtrak service from states and communities throughout the country, and we look forward to participating in the study.

### **Building the Amtrak Workforce of the Future**

Since the enactment of the IIJA, we have accelerated the efforts we already had underway to recruit, hire and train the thousands of employees we will need to restore all services to pre-pandemic levels, manage and construct the capital projects the IIJA will fund, and operate the additional Amtrak trains throughout the country that the IIJA will make possible. That is a challenging task in the current labor market – but we are accomplishing it.

We have hired 3,200 new employees at Amtrak since the beginning of FY 2022 in October of 2021. That is a record number for us, even though the fiscal year is not over.

We are working aggressively to hire and train new engineers and conductors, and mechanical employees who maintain our equipment, so that we can restore service frequency on all of routes to pre-pandemic service frequency and provide additional passenger capacity to accommodate growth. During the first 11 months of FY 2022, we hired 88 engineer trainees, 280 conductor trainees, and 312 mechanical employees (excluding coach cleaners). Additionally, we brought on almost 800 new maintenance-of-way employees, project managers, and professional engineers with the critical skills to support the huge increase in capital projects and state of good repair work called for under the CONNECT NEC 2035 program on Amtrak's portion of the NEC. While we are making great strides in filling open and newly created positions, enactment of Congressman Crawford's Retirees to Rail Act, which would allow railroad retirees to temporarily return to work during the labor shortage the railroad industry is currently experiencing without loss of Railroad Retirement benefits, would be very beneficial in helping us restore service over the next few months.

We are pursuing innovative approaches to find the employees we need to fully restore service and utilize the funding the IIJA provides. Since June, we have held 11 hiring events at major Amtrak facilities and crew bases around the country. These events have been very successful: at the Los Angeles Career Fair we conducted 230 interviews and extended 132 offers that were accepted. We plan to hold 54 hiring events during FY 2023, during which our goal is to make approximately 6,000 offers resulting in 4,000 additional hires.

We are also pursuing new ways to attract members of the military community to work at Amtrak. In partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's "Hiring our Heroes" program, we are hosting a group of cohorts, comprised of service members, military spouses, and veterans, as Department of Defense Skillbridge Interns. Individuals participating in this program work with Amtrak in a temporary position for 12 weeks, after which we hope to retain them as full-time employees. Amtrak's participation in this program also advances our goal of creating a more diverse workforce.

We recognize that we are going to need new ways to train our workforce of the future. We are currently working on a template Project Labor Agreement in line with the Memorandum of Understanding we entered into last year with North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU), the labor organization representing more than three million skilled craft professionals. Once that agreement is in place, Amtrak and NABTU will

work together to ensure a consistent construction workforce pipeline that will accelerate apprenticeship readiness programs, promote diversity, and ensure fair wages and benefits for the workers who will build the infrastructure that IIJA funding will allow Amtrak to construct.

In March, we began a Mechanical Apprenticeship Program at our heavy maintenance facility in Beech Grove, Indiana. I am pleased to report that FRA, under the excellent leadership of Administrator Bose, recently awarded an \$8 million CRISI grant to Amtrak that will allow us to expand that program to include multiple crafts at other maintenance facilities throughout the country. Twenty-six apprentices are participating in the first expansion of that program in Wilmington, Delaware, which began on September 12. We plan to create additional apprenticeship positions at Beech Grove, and to implement the program at our maintenance facilities in Washington, D.C., New York City, and Los Angeles. We are also seeking, along with the Delaware Department of Transportation, a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for an innovative program to teach railroading basics to individuals whose employment has been impacted by COVID-19 in order to make them competitive for railroad jobs.

We are also working to engage with potential future Amtrak employees at a younger age. We recently began partnering with the New York City Department of Education to build talent pipelines with high school graduates throughout the city.

The IIJA also led us to expand our internship program, which brings current college and graduate students to work at Amtrak, and our management training and management associate programs, which provide recent graduates with the opportunity to rotate among different Amtrak groups before transitioning into permanent positions. We currently have 36 management trainees or management associates, and 144 interns. These programs serve as a pipeline for bringing in the people we need for our future workforce – I know that from personal experience, because I began my Amtrak career as an intern. Internships and training programs are particularly effective at attracting individuals entering the workforce who have the professional training we need in areas such as engineering and information technology, and who would not otherwise have considered a railroad career. These programs also connect us with the colleges and universities that participants attend.

One of the challenges that Amtrak and the railroad industry face is that the number of U.S. colleges and universities that offer any railroad engineering or operations courses can literally be counted on the fingers of one hand. For that reason, we are pleased that FRA recently awarded a CRISI grant to the University of Delaware, one of the few U.S. educational institutions that offers railway engineering courses, to create a railway engineering program at Morgan State University, a historically black college and university. Like the University of Delaware, Morgan State is located along the Northeast Corridor, a short distance from Baltimore Penn Station. We look forward to providing future employment opportunities to students who enroll in its program.

Looking ahead, we plan to apply for additional CRISI grants this fall that would allow further expansion of our Mechanical Apprenticeship Program, and to develop apprenticeship programs in other crafts. We will also continue to aggressively seek other opportunities to partner with labor organizations, states and communities, and educational institutions on programs to engage, recruit, hire and train new Amtrak employees. By doing that, we can hire the many new employees we need to carry out the objectives of the IIJA, while providing stronger pathways to employment for a diverse, 21st Century passenger rail workforce.

### **The IIJA and Sustainability**

In addition to enhancing mobility and creating jobs, the investments we are making with funding provided by the IIJA will advance sustainability and help us reach our goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2045.

- The new ALC-42 locomotives we are acquiring for our long-distance trains emit 89% less nitrogen oxide and 95% less particulate matter than the 1990s era diesel locomotives they are replacing.
- The 17 diesel-hybrid Intercity Trainsets we are acquiring for our *Empire Service* trains will be the first Amtrak equipment designed to utilize battery power for propulsion.
- IIJA-funded investments we will be making to advance our Major Station Amtrak Development Programs will increase energy efficiency, reduce water consumption and improve station resiliency.

- The expansion and improvement of Amtrak service the IIJA makes possible will attract many new passengers to our trains, which will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. On average, traveling by Amtrak is 46% more energy efficient than traveling by car and 34% more energy efficient than domestic air travel. On the electrified Northeast Corridor, taking Amtrak reduces greenhouse gas emissions by up to 83% compared to driving, and by up to 72% compared to flying.

## **Looking to the Future**

The enactment of the IIJA has been extraordinarily impactful for Amtrak. The additional jobs the IIJA has already created, and the many long needed projects it has allowed to advance, represent just a tiny fraction of the multitude of benefits it will produce in the years ahead. However, future action by Congress, particularly with respect to annual appropriations and long-term, dedicated funding, will play an important part in ensuring that the benefits of the IIJA are fully realized and amplified.

The IIJA's advance appropriations were intended to supplement, not replace, Amtrak's annual appropriations, and can only be used for limited purposes. It is important that Amtrak continue to receive, in addition to IIJA advance appropriations, annual appropriations at levels that are sufficient to operate all of our existing routes at pre-pandemic service frequencies and maintain our assets and equipment, as contemplated in the IIJA's authorizations.

It is also important that reauthorization of the STB reflect the vital role passenger rail plays in our national rail network, as the reauthorization bill recently introduced by Chairman DeFazio and Rail Subcommittee Chairman Payne does.

What is most important, of course, is developing a sustainable, long-term approach to funding intercity passenger rail. While the funding provided by the IIJA has jumpstarted the expansion and improvement of Amtrak service, the five years of advance appropriations and authorizations it provides will not get us all the way down the tracks. Like other transportation modes, intercity passenger rail needs adequate, assured, long-term funding that will allow it to fully realize its potential. Because of the dedicated, multi-year funding provided through the IIJA, Amtrak is already hiring thousands of new employees to support the work that will occur over the next few years. For the first

time in our history, we can properly plan and staff for our needs with certainty that we will have the financial resources to carry out projects. Amtrak looks forward to working with the members of the Committee and Committee staff to make this a permanent reality.

Thanks to the IIJA, this is the most exciting time in the history of Amtrak. Like all of our employees, I am thrilled to be a part of it, and grateful for the opportunity you have given us. We look forward to working with our stakeholders and the Committee to turn the vision embodied in the IIJA into reality, and to providing those who live in every region of our country with the intercity passenger rail service they need and deserve.