

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 26, 2010

Mr. Joseph Boardman  
President and CEO  
Amtrak (National Passenger Railroad Corporation)  
60 Massachusetts Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Boardman:

We are writing to ask that Amtrak take all possible steps to address problems with the rail bridge near Church's Ferry, North Dakota.

At our meeting on January 21, 2010, we discussed the dangers rising water posed to the bridge, and learned that service over the portion of the Empire Builder line dependent on that bridge was in jeopardy. We asked you to provide us with a plan to resolve the problem, including the costs that would be involved.

Since then, we have learned that Amtrak plans to suspend service over the bridge when the level of Devils Lake reaches 1453 feet above sea level, or perhaps sooner, depending on the structural integrity of the bridge. Although there have been discussions as to what would be required to upgrade the bridge and connecting track, we are disappointed that three months later we still do not have a good idea of costs and details of a plan to move toward a solution.

We know that a long-term solution to raise the bridge and track may require additional resources. However, given the precariousness of the bridge's operating status, it is important that a plan be put together immediately. Therefore, we formally request that you use any and all resources available in Amtrak's current budget to proceed with scoping and engineering a solution, and any other possible steps that can be taken toward a finished plan.

The North Dakota delegation has long been vocal supporters and defenders of Amtrak because we recognize how critical service is to the many communities you serve around the country. Citizens in and around Grand Forks, Devils Lake and Rugby deserve access to our nation's passenger rail service. We need to find a solution for the thousands of North Dakotans who rely on Amtrak before it is too late.

Thanks for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to resolve this situation as quickly as possible for the people of northeastern North Dakota.

Sincerely,



Byron L. Dorgan  
United States Senator



Kent Conrad  
United States Senator



Earl Pomeroy  
Member of Congress