



LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR H.R. 5449: PASSENGER RAIL REFORM AND INVESTMENT ACT OF 2014

American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners

American Association of State Highway
and Transportation Officials

States for Passenger Rail Coalition

Transportation for America

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission

The United States Conference of Mayors

American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners
Post Office Box 6307
Columbus, Georgia 31917
President: 603-490-7927

September 15, 2014

The Honorable Bill Shuster, Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster:

AAPRCO is pleased to support the bipartisan "PRIIA 2014" bill that you plan to introduce September 17, as a positive beginning to the reauthorization process. We recognize the significance of having the top four committee and subcommittee leaders support intercity passenger rail funding levels higher than the federal government has provided in recent years.

Of course, we know that appropriated levels regularly fall short of what is authorized. As well, the bill's funding levels are short of what is needed to sustain and grow the system consistent with public need.

We look forward to working with the committee and its Senate counterpart with a view towards increasing funding. We also will be suggesting other changes, such as requiring Amtrak's 5-year plan (Section 202) to include "cost recovery" (as in Section 204) or "loss per passenger-mile" rather than "loss per passenger." More broadly, we will continue to work for the time when rail will be a normal part of a larger surface transportation solution to our nation's infrastructure challenges.

Thank you for your hard work for intercity passenger rail in a difficult political environment.

Sincerely,
Taylor Johnson, President
American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners

Cc: The Honorable Nick Joe Rahall
The Honorable Jeff Denham
The Honorable Corinne Brown

Michael W. Hancock, P.E., President
Secretary, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

Bud Wright, Executive Director

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September 16, 2014

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
Ranking Member
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Denham
Chairman
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous
Materials
U.S. House of Representatives
B-376 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Corrine Brown
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous
Materials
U.S. House of Representatives
B-376 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member Rahall, Chairman Denham, and Ranking Member Brown:

On behalf of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, we applaud the bipartisan approach taken by House Transportation and Infrastructure leadership in developing H.R. 5449, the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2014. Forty nine percent of Amtrak ridership is on state-supported rail corridors, and this legislation seeks to ensure that states have a greater role in decisions affecting these routes.

H.R. 5449 contains many of the reforms State Departments of Transportation are seeking for our Nation's passenger rail system. Greater transparency in Amtrak accounting and providing states information to assist Amtrak in reducing costs and making data-driven decisions, are key elements to growing and improving passenger rail service. Streamlining environmental reviews and accelerating project delivery will promote consistency across U.S. Department of Transportation modal administrations to ensure that rail projects continue to advance and investment is made in a timely manner to develop service options that will boost economic development and create jobs. Providing states the eligibility to invest in capital infrastructure improvements will help to improve safety, on-time performance, increase frequency and reliability and provide a program of projects that will continue to advance intercity passenger rail.

Finally, it is important to highlight the continued need for a strong federal-state partnership in delivering passenger rail services, especially in the areas of standard setting, research and addressing state of good repair needs. States along the Northeast Corridor continue to invest in Amtrak's operations and capital, and state of good repair should remain a priority.

We look forward to working with the leadership and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as you advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael W. Hancock".

Michael W. Hancock, P.E.
President
Secretary, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

September 16, 2014



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Vice Chair

Ms. Joan Bray, Missouri

Financial Officer

Sen. Carolyn McGinn, Kansas

Director

Laura Kliewer

*Bringing Together
State Leaders from
Across the Region
to Advocate
for Passenger Rail
Improvements*

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission is a nine-state interstate compact commission that promotes, coordinates and supports regional improvements to passenger rail service. Our member states include Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

Honorable Jeff Denham
Chairman, Subcommittee on Railroads,
Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials
House Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
B-376 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Corrine Brown
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Railroads,
Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials
House Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Denham and Ranking Member Brown:

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) appreciates the Subcommittee's effort to introduce the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2014 (PRRIA), to reauthorize Amtrak funding and the programs of the Federal Railroad Administration. MIPRC staunchly believes that the continued development of a national intercity passenger rail system is a crucial component of our nation's transportation network and that such a national system is needed to compensate for the ever-worsening problems of highway and aviation congestion.

There are four components of the bill we particularly support:

1. We want to thank you for including the **"State-Supported Route Advisory Committee"** as recommended by the states. The provision at its heart recognizes the critical role that states, corridors and regions play in the planning and delivery of intercity passenger rail service. As proposed, the group would provide a structured, organized means of determining cost responsibilities. The proposed timelines would benefit both Amtrak and the states and allow both groups as well state governments to budget and program funds.
2. Thank you, as well, for including **Amtrak reporting requirements** for state-supported service and also establishing a dispute resolution process. Many states, both individually and in groups, have expressed the need for more openness, transparency, and clarity in Amtrak's accounting reports to the states.
3. We appreciate the inclusion of a **station development goal**. Many newly developed and renovated stations across the Midwest have become centers for multimodal transportation and have spurred significant economic development.
4. Lastly, we applaud the effort to **streamline the approval process for railroad projects**.

We also have several initial comments on PRRIA that we believe would enhance the bill. We appreciate you considering our comments and we offer to work alongside you and members of the Subcommittee as the bill is deliberated by Congress.

1. Maintain and Adequately Fund Current Capital Programs

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) authorized three new capital programs: Intercity Passenger Rail Corridors, High Speed Rail Corridors, and Congestion Relief. PRRIA provides funding authorization for only one of these programs (intercity passenger rail), and adds another set aside exclusively for the NEC. The flexibility provided to the USDOT via PRIIA should be retained so that grants can be made nationally to improve passenger rail transportation, and at significantly higher levels than the \$150 million annually outlined in PRRIA for non-NEC states' passenger rail improvements.

Funds made available under PRIIA through the federal High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program beginning in FY 2009 are allowing the Midwest to begin implementing the first phases of a plan to bring faster, more frequent passenger rail service to the region. For example, HSIPR funds awarded to Illinois and Michigan have already enabled 110 mph service on portions of the Chicago to Detroit and the Chicago to St. Louis routes.

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1. Maintain and Adequately Fund Current Capital Programs (cont.)

On-time performance has improved dramatically on the St. Louis to Kansas City corridor by addressing key chokepoints along that route. In addition, necessary planning and environmental work on several other Midwestern corridors – including Chicago to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minneapolis/St. Paul to Duluth, MN, and Chicago to Omaha – has been made possible through funding of the federal/state partnership provided for intercity passenger rail under PRIIA. In FY 2013, ridership on the nine Midwestern corridor routes combined was almost 3.26 million; more than double the number of riders on those routes in FY 2004.

This development is already bringing significant economic development and jobs to our region. The full build-out of the Midwest Regional Rail System is expected to have an overall economic benefit of \$23 billion while creating more than 57,000 permanent jobs.

In order to continue this valuable development, Midwestern states need continued assurance of adequate federal capital assistance.

2. Create a Transportation Trust Fund

The Act is silent as to the creation of a funding source that would end, forever, the annual Amtrak debate. And yet the time could not be more appropriate, given the Highway Trust Fund dilemma, to establish a true transportation trust fund rather than a highway trust fund alone. Many potential revenue sources to seed such a fund have been put forth, and we encourage Congress to choose from them a path forward.

3. Increase Amtrak Authorization and Appropriation Levels

Funding levels provided for Amtrak for the next five years are insufficient for the provision of high-quality passenger rail service. We recommend that funding levels match those proposed by the Federal Railroad Administration in the Grow America Act – at least \$5 billion per year.

4. Allow Flexibility for Amtrak to Use Appropriations as Needed

Amtrak appropriations are divided between operating and capital accounts, thus leading to periodic debates over the elimination of the operating funds altogether. In order for Amtrak to operate wisely, top management needs the flexibility to use the total appropriation as it sees fit, and have the ability to decide for itself how much should be devoted to operating and capital purposes. We thus suggest the appropriation be one amount, rather than two.

5. Authorize Funding for the Next Generation Equipment Pool Committee and for the Rail Cooperative Research Program

PRIIA Section 305 established the Next Generation Equipment Pool Committee and authorized funding of \$5 million. This committee has done excellent work in developing standardized specifications for passenger rail equipment and helping initiate and facilitate the first joint equipment purchases. The important work of this committee needs to continue. To do so, it will need reauthorized funding authority. Similarly, the National Cooperative Rail Research Program (established by Section 306 of PRIIA) has funded important rail research and will need reauthorization funding authority to continue its work.

6. Eliminate NEC Improvement Fund Account / National Network Account (PRRIA Sec. 201)

MIPRC does not favor the provision in the bill to establish two separate fund accounts, one for the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and another account for the national network, with transfers between the two totally at Amtrak's discretion. Implementing such a segregated division between the NEC and the remainder of the national system could potentially harm the functionality of the overall system – which is the purpose of the publicly funded railroad to begin with. Further, taxpayer funds nationwide have made the NEC successful. The taxpayers outside the NEC should not be punished for these investments by seeing their own rail network potentially stripped of financial support.

7. Extend Letters of Intent for Capital Projects Nationally

The ability of the USDOT Secretary to obligate funding for capital projects with future budget authority needs to be extended nationally, not just for the NEC. Congestion-relieving projects across the country deserve this opportunity.

(continued on next page)

8. Provide Credit for State Investments in Rail Infrastructure

States that make investments should receive credit in future federal grant programs, either by a lower match requirement or a credit toward the match.

9. Strengthen Performance Metrics

While the increase in freight traffic in recent years signals improvements in our nation's economy, Amtrak's on-time performance nationally has plummeted in the wake of significantly higher levels of freight rail traffic. PRRIA needs to stress the importance of strengthening the Surface Transportation Board's ability to hold freight railroads accountable for dispatching and handling passenger trains so they are more reliable. A program of incentives for rewarding freight railroads for proper handling of passenger trains, along with penalties to encourage better freight railroad performance, should be created within PRRIA.

Please contact us if MIPRC can be of further assistance in supporting your efforts on these issues.

Sincerely,



Tim Hoeffner
MIPRC Chair



Joan Bray
MIPRC Vice Chair



Laura Kliewer
MIPRC Director

cc: Subcommittee Members from Midwestern states:

- Rep. Larry Bucshon, *Indiana*
- Rep. Bob Gibbs, *Ohio*
- Rep. Sam Graves, *Missouri*
- Rep. Daniel Lipinski, *Illinois*
- Rep. Candice S. Miller, *Michigan*
- Rep. Timothy J. Walz, *Minnesota*

Chair, **Patricia Quinn**, NNEPRA
Secretary, **Beth Nachreiner**, Maryland DOT
Treasurer, **Paul C. Worley**, North Carolina DOT

States for
www.s4prc.org



September 15, 2014

The Honorable Bill Shuster
2165 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
2307 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff Denham
1730 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Corrine Brown
2111 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2014 H.R. 5449

Dear Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the introduction of H.R. 5449, the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act (PRRIA) of 2014.

These comments are presented by the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc. (SPRC). The SPRC is a coalition of state leaders from across the United States who work together to support the development and growth of intercity passenger rail service in America.

- State-supported routes generate 50 percent of Amtrak's passengers and we provide approximately one-third of Amtrak's budget. We believe the best way to empower states, ensure an equal partnership, and strengthen management oversight is to seat states on the Amtrak Board of Directors.
- The creation of the State-Supported Route Advisory Committee to help oversee implementation of Section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) of 2008 is helpful, and we need to ensure that funding to support the work of the Committee is authorized within USDOT's budget and not left to the states.
- We support the inclusion of a station development goal. Several states have seen first-hand how a new passenger rail station can encourage downtown development. For example, in Illinois the Bloomington-Normal's new multimodal station has led to almost \$200 million in private sector investment in the downtown area.

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Iowa
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Rail Authority

T4America statement in response to passenger rail reauthorization bill

11 Sep 2014 | Under [Campaign Blog](#), [Press Releases](#) | Posted by [Transportation for America](#) | [0 Comments](#) | [amtrak](#), [bill shuster](#), [passenger rail](#), [PRIIA](#), [rahall](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee today released a long-awaited update to the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, the law that funds passenger rail.

James Corless, director of Transportation for America, issued this statement in response:

"We are pleased that Chairmen [Bill Shuster](#) (R-PA) and [Jeff Denham](#) (R-CA) and Ranking Members [Nick Rahall](#) (D-WV) and [Corrine Brown](#) (D-FL) were able to work together to draw up a bill that preserves funding for our national rail network.

Reliable intercity rail is critical to our nation's future economic success. It not only provides key links among large population centers, it also serves as a lifeline to smaller communities without air or intercity bus service.

Even as it strengthens the prospects of long-term federal support for our national passenger rail system, the bill also invites states to become stronger partners with investments that will further solidify the national network and its future. We hope the renewed commitment demonstrated by this bill opens the door for Congress to create a dedicated funding source for rail service, putting it on the same footing as other transportation modes."



A bold voice for transportation workers

Support the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2014

September 16, 2014

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge your support for the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2014 (PRRIA) when it is considered by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee later this week. This important legislation funds and sustains a key component of our national transportation system, and we commend Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member Rahall, Subcommittee Chairman Denham and Subcommittee Ranking Member Brown for their leadership in crafting this bipartisan, compromise legislation.

This bill reauthorizes Amtrak for the next four years, improves rail infrastructure, and provides greater certainty to Amtrak and its employees as they implement long-term modernization plans. The bill also authorizes an additional \$300 million for the Intercity Passenger Rail Program – to be split between the Northeast Corridor and other national routes – that will help strengthen our national passenger rail network, and create more diverse and reliable travel options for the public. The bill also codifies Buy America standards for the purchase of Amtrak's rolling stock and track improvements through the established RRIF financing provisions.

Most importantly, PRRIA rejects wrongheaded reform proposals to privatize Amtrak, break up the operation, and outsource good middle class jobs. In doing so, the legislation affirms the need for a national Amtrak system as part of America's interconnected transportation infrastructure.

We do, however, have concerns that PRRIA does not provide Amtrak with the funding levels required to meet the needs of an aging system and the demands of Americans for more passenger rail options. Amtrak carried a record 31.6 million passengers in FY 2013, and has set ridership records in 10 of the last 11 years. This comes at a time when insufficient budgets and bare-bones federal appropriations have allowed the system to age and deteriorate. As Amtrak's annual budget requests have established, its aging fleet needs replacing and the system faces significant and disruptive renovations to tracks, bridges, tunnels, and other infrastructure in the coming years. The authorization levels set in this bill – which would level out funding at current appropriations levels – do not provide the funds needed for these long term improvements. We remain committed, however, to working with this Committee and your counterparts in the Senate to set in motion a long-term vision for expanded investment in Amtrak.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer



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BRIAN C. WAHLER
Mayor of Piscataway
SETTI WARREN
Mayor of Newton

CEO and Executive Director
TOM COCHRAN

September 15, 2014

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman, Transportation &
Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
Ranking Member, Transportation &
Infrastructure Committee
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member Rahall:

On behalf of The United States Conference of Mayors, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in developing the "Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2014" (HR 5449), bipartisan legislation that seeks to ensure the continued delivery of important passenger rail services by Amtrak and states throughout the nation.

The Conference of Mayors and its member mayors for some time have called for bipartisan Congressional action on intercity passenger rail and on the other crucial transportation challenges before the nation. The mayors applaud your strong bipartisan commitment to move forward with HR 5449 in this fashion, and the Conference of Mayors supports this bipartisan effort.

Your legislation reaffirms the importance of preserving a national passenger rail network, a top priority for the Conference of Mayors and its members. Our research continues to underscore the need to maintain and expand the nation's passenger rail network and services to meet our economic and mobility needs, serving people and businesses in our metropolitan areas and in other areas seeking to strengthen their connectivity to these economic centers. Going forward, the Conference of Mayors will continue to work with you to find additional resources where possible to invest further in this network and services. Your legislation also includes reforms to increase Amtrak's financial transparency and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of passenger rail services.

On behalf of the nation's mayors, thank you for your bipartisan leadership on this legislation. The Conference supports your efforts as you move HR 5449 forward.

Sincerely,

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director

The introduction and markup of this legislation is an important step in bringing long-term stability and investment to Amtrak and its workforce. It also continues the collaborative, bipartisan approach that Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member Rahall have taken toward much needed transportation investments. We urge you to support PRRIA in Committee, and look forward to working with you to create the transportation network that Americans want and deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Wytkind". The signature is fluid and somewhat abstract, with several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

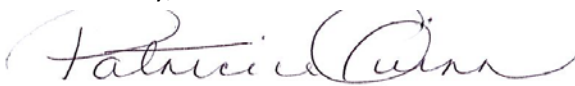
Edward Wytkind
President

- States and commuter agencies along the Northeast Corridor (NEC) contributed over \$214 million in capital and operating funds in FY 2013. With over \$13 billion of major backlog projects, the NEC's federal investment needs outpace what is proposed in PRRIA to bring the corridor up to a state-of-good-repair.
- The Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC), authorized in Section 305 of PRRIA 2008, has produced important work in developing and promulgating standard specifications for passenger rail equipment (passenger cars and locomotives). The work of the NGEC continues throughout the procurement and maintenance life-cycle and the Congress should provide on-going financial support. The responsibility for important oversight, and management functions, as well as on going document control, and additional specification development should be funded at \$1 million per year.
- We believe the partnership funding authorization and Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) initiatives should be broadened to include all states who wish to invest in passenger rail service improvements. Further, we greatly appreciate the provision making Positive Train Control (PTC) eligible for RRIF financing.
- Thank you for promoting the streamlining of environmental reviews which can help accelerate project delivery. While we honor compliance with environmental rules, all too often they become the project and consume considerable amounts of time to coordinate and complete. Thanks as well for proposing a means of enhancing reviews as part of the historic preservation process.
- We applaud the bill's efforts to provide for development of competitive service options.

We appreciate the work of the Committee in developing this important bipartisan legislation. The SPRC has had the opportunity to meet with staff and provide meaningful input. We look forward to working with you and your staff on the legislation as it moves through the legislative process.

We appreciate the work of the Committee in developing this important bipartisan legislation and we thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,



Patricia Quinn, Chair

States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Inc.

cc: Joseph H. Boardman, President and CEO, National Railroad Passenger Corporation
Joseph C. Szabo, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration