

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2020

William Flynn
President and Chief Executive Officer, Amtrak
60 Massachusetts Ave NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Flynn,

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic Congress passed the CARES Act, which provided Amtrak with \$1.02 billion to alleviate the severe economic impact COVID-19 produced. You have asked Congress to provide record levels of taxpayer funding, yet, in your supplemental funding request for Fiscal Year 2021 you are proposing to cut service and staff during an unprecedented time. We are deeply concerned by the downsizing plan outlined in your supplemental funding request and believe it to be contrary to public interest. These cuts would not only dramatically reduce the utility of the nation's passenger rail network, but would also ignore Congressional intent to expedite economic recovery following the pandemic.

Amtrak's plan to terminate one out of every five employees would put thousands of Americans out of work at a time when millions of Americans have lost their jobs. This severe reduction in workforce raises serious doubts about whether a realistic plan exists for fully restoring service in a timely fashion. Your plan also calls for reducing the frequency of all National Network long-distance trains, while consolidating three routes into one, thus greatly reducing Amtrak's ability to operate its Network at full capacity. These actions will eliminate thousands of points of connection and dramatically reduce the utility of Amtrak as a transportation provider, irrevocably hurting hundreds of communities and small towns already devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In your FY2021 supplemental funding request you stated "[w]e understand how important Amtrak service is to the nation and, particularly, small communities across the nation where we play a unique role in connecting these communities to the rest of America." Your request, unfortunately, does not reflect that understanding.

As Congress considers your supplementary request for FY2021, we ask that you provide the following information:

- How much would it cost to maintain the current service levels on all long-distance routes?
- How does the cost of retaining the current workforce in active status, ready to return to work, compare with that of hiring and training new employees?
- By reducing the workforce, what is your desired outcome? Why?

- What ridership metrics will Amtrak use to decide when to restore capacity, and how will they account for the reduced demand signal resulting from fewer frequencies and connections? Do you plan to restore service in phases?
- You wrote restoring these frequencies will be “subject to adequate funding;” What does Amtrak consider adequate funding?

Thank you for your time and cooperation, we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

STEVE DAINES
United States Senator