



May 31, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Shelby and Leahy,

On behalf of business and institutional stakeholders comprising the Coalition for the Northeast Corridor (CNEC), we urge the Senate Appropriations Committee to increase federal investment in the Northeast Corridor rail system and address one of our nation's most urgent infrastructure challenges. Specifically, we urge the Committee to propose \$1.9 billion in new funding for Amtrak, including \$650 million dedicated to the Northeast Corridor, and also to propose funding for the Federal State Partnership for State of Good Repair (SOGR) for FY 2019 at \$500 million – the same levels recently proposed by the House Appropriations Committee.

The Northeast Corridor – a nearly-500-mile network of railways between Washington, DC and Boston – is the nation's most economically vital rail system and is one of the primary reasons why the Northeast is responsible for nearly \$3 trillion in annual economic productivity. A nonpartisan federal commission has found that losing the Northeast Corridor would cost the American economy around \$100 million per day.

This is why it is so frightening to know that the Northeast Corridor is crumbling under the weight of its own aging infrastructure. More than 11 percent of all Northeast Corridor trains last year were delayed and the situation is rapidly getting worse. The longer we wait to address this, the more complicated and expensive it will become – and failing to solve the problem could lead to the loss of operations along most or all of the network.

To be clear, this is not an urban or regional issue – it is a national issue that will become a national economic crisis if it is not dealt with swiftly and comprehensively.

The House Appropriations Committee recently updated its FY 2019 spending bill to include \$1.9 billion in new funding for Amtrak, including \$650 million dedicated to the Northeast Corridor. The Committee also proposed raising funding for Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair grants to \$500 million from the \$250 million approved in FY 2018.

We urge your Committee to match the level of investment proposed by the House Appropriations Committee. This kind of increase in federal investment would represent an important step forward in repairing and modernizing the Northeast Corridor rail system. Thank you for your consideration and we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael Friedberg".

Michael Friedberg, Executive Director

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