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*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.

April 6, 2017

(Transmitted via Email)

Dear Midwestern Member of Congress,

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission appreciates President Trump's commitment to invest in our nation's infrastructure but is deeply troubled by the Trump Administration's proposal to eliminate all federal funding for Amtrak's long-distance trains and to cut \$499 million from the successful TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant program, which invests in regionally and nationally significant infrastructure projects, including passenger rail.

Long-distance trains in the Midwest threatened by these proposed cuts include the *Capitol Limited, California Zephyr, Cardinal, City of New Orleans, Empire Builder, Lake Shore Limited, Southwest Chief* and *Texas Eagle*. Eliminate them and **our Midwestern states of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and Ohio would have no intercity passenger rail service.**

At a minimum, elimination of long distance routes would result in 50 Midwestern towns and cities losing Amtrak service entirely:

- **Indiana:** Connersville, Elkhart, South Bend and Waterloo.
- **Iowa:** Burlington, Creston, Fort Madison, Mount Pleasant, Osceola and Ottumwa.
- **Kansas:** Dodge City, Garden City, Hutchinson, Lawrence, Newton and Topeka.
- **Minnesota:** Detroit Lakes, Red Wing, St. Cloud, Staples, the Twin Cities (St. Paul/Minneapolis) and Winona.
- **Missouri:** La Plata, Arcadia and Poplar Bluff.
- **Nebraska:** Hastings, Holdrege, Lincoln, McCook and Omaha.
- **North Dakota:** Devils Lake, Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot, Rugby, Stanley and Williston.
- **Ohio:** Alliance, Bryan, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Elyria, Sandusky and Toledo.
- **Wisconsin:** Columbus, La Crosse, Portage, Tomah and Wisconsin Dells.

We ask you to support passenger rail in the Midwest by (1) **opposing the Administration's proposed cuts to passenger rail service**, and (2) **supporting full funding of all passenger rail-related provisions at the authorized levels within the FAST Act – including Amtrak and the passenger rail-related grant programs – and continuation of funding for the vital TIGER program.**

We also ask you to communicate your support of passenger rail in the Midwest to the chairs and ranking members of your chamber's Appropriations Committee and applicable subcommittees.

We are asking you to take these actions for three key reasons:

- **Many communities depend on long-distance trains.** Even if a town has just one stop daily in each direction, long-distance trains are an essential service to many rural communities. Also, passengers don't distinguish between "state-supported" and "long-distance" trains; they just take the train to

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where they need to go. According to Amtrak, well over a half-million passengers (663,948) connected from Midwestern state-supported trains to long-distance trains in Chicago, Kansas City and St. Louis over the past five years (FFY 2012-FFY 2016). The National Association of Rail Passengers estimates that under the proposed cuts at least 220 cities nationwide would lose all train service.

- **Long-distance trains are popular.** Ridership on the Midwest's eight long-distance routes increased 16 percent in the past 10 years. And in just one year, between October 2015 and October 2016, ridership rose almost 4 percent on these routes.
- **Losing long-distance trains would harm state-supported trains and could devastate other infrastructure investments.** If long-distance trains disappear, so does the cost sharing between them and state-supported routes for critical infrastructure like Chicago Union Station, where \$1 billion in improvements is planned. Also, significant fixed costs for passenger rail service are now shared between long-distance and state-supported service. Losing long-distance service would put an undue burden on the states with state-supported service.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to discussing this further with you and your staff.

Sincerely,



Tim Hoeffner
MIPRC Chair



Joan Bray
MIPRC Vice Chair



Carolyn McGinn
MIPRC Financial Officer



Laura Kliewer
MIPRC Director