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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.

Via Email

Date: April 26, 2019

Organization Submitting Testimony:

Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC)

Submitted to:

The Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Agency the testimony is addressing:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary and the Federal Railroad Administration

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) 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.

Intercity passenger rail – both corridor and longer-distance – plays a critical role in the region’s transportation network. Thereby, rail projects need a federal partnership with states, similar to ones seen in other modes of transportation, to assist with the capital investments necessary to build a modern, efficient passenger system in the Midwest.

During FY 2018, more than 2.8 million people traveled on the Midwest’s intercity passenger rail corridor services (routes less than 750 miles in length) within the region, capping off 10 years of steady growth on these regional, state-supported routes. The Midwest currently has nine state-supported routes, with plans to increase frequencies and add new routes. During the past 10 years, ridership on Midwestern corridor routes has increased nine percent and revenue has grown by 33 percent.

Eight long-distances routes serve the Midwest, all originating out of Chicago, which is the nation’s largest rail hub. Altogether, these routes have 80 station stops across the Midwest, many of them in rural communities not served by other forms of intercity transportation.

Federal funds awarded to our states beginning in FFY 2009 have allowed for the development of the first phase of the Midwest Regional Rail System – a 3,000-mile, nine-state passenger rail system plan to implement a network of faster, more frequent regional service (up to 110 mph) in 100- to 500-mile corridors, with its hub in Chicago.

MIPRC thanks Congress for appropriating additional funding during FFY 2018 and 2019 for Amtrak and the three rail development grant programs created in the FAST Act, as well as providing substantive funding for the BUILD program.

As you turn your attention to FFY 2020 appropriations, we urge the House THUD Subcommittee to build upon these and other crucial rail transportation infrastructure investments.

MIPRC strongly supports the FFY 2020 THUD request that States for Passenger Rail Coalition sent to the House and Senate subcommittees on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies on **April 12, 2019**, and would like to emphasize the following:

- **Additional funding for Amtrak above the FAST Act-authorized levels**, to pursue projects in the Midwest – such as additional investment in the Chicago Union Station Master Plan and restoration of service to Wichita and Newton, Kansas, via the *Heartland Flyer Extension* – that Amtrak listed in its budget request as “FY 2020 Funding Needs Above the Authorized Level.”
- **Additional funding above the FAST Act-authorized levels** for the **Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI)** grants program, the **Federal-State Partnership of State of Good Repair (SOGR)** grants program and the **Restoration and Enhancement** grants program. Midwestern states have applied under each of the grant funding rounds made available thus far, have received some awards, and anticipate applying in future rounds in the years to come, to build out and strengthen the Midwest’s passenger rail network.
- **Continued strong funding for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD)** Transportation Discretionary Grant program, the extremely popular multi-modal infrastructure investments program for projects with a significant local or regional impact. Over the course of the 10 rounds of funding, MIPRC states have received \$306.5 million in BUILD/TIGER funding for 15 passenger rail improvement projects in six states.

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission stands ready to assist the Subcommittee and the full Appropriations Committee as you look to build upon the FFY 19 investments in rail infrastructure.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this critical topic. We would be more than happy to provide additional information as requested.

Sincerely,



Beth McCluskey
MIPRC Chair



Tim Hoeffner
MIPRC Vice Chair



Sharon Negele
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Laura Kliewer
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