

Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission

Rep. Joan Bray, Missouri
Chair

Sen. Sheila Kiscaden, Minnesota
Vice Chair

Sen. DiAnna Schimek, Nebraska
Financial Officer

October 28, 2003

Dear Member of Congress,

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission worked with state and local officials, businesses, advocacy groups and other groups to develop the American Passenger Rail Agreement – a set of fundamental objectives that we agree need to be pursued to ensure that passenger rail not only survives, but thrives, in the years to come. We ask you to endorse the principles found below.

The American Passenger Rail Agreement

In order to ensure the safety, quality, reliability and efficiency of our country's vital transportation network and to preserve our national defense, America needs a balanced, integrated transportation system and the American people need diverse transportation choices. Passenger rail is a critical component of a modern, multi-modal transportation system, and needs to have financial support, unified policy development and oversight similar to that afforded to our air, highway and mass transit modes.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, do urge Congress and the President of the United States to fully institute the following passenger rail components, which are critical to the future of passenger rail in the United States, within the upcoming reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and/or Amtrak Reauthorization legislation:

1. Establish a dedicated, multi-year federal capital-funding program for intercity passenger rail, patterned after the existing federal highway, airport and mass transit programs.
2. Establish, as federal policy, a preserved and improved national passenger rail system – a nationwide, interconnected passenger rail system that stimulates higher levels of efficiency, innovation and responsiveness. Direct the Federal Railroad Administration, or another agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation, to – with state and local input – develop, fund and oversee this federal policy.
3. Provide full federal funding of Amtrak to maintain the national network during the period that the new federal plans and policies are being developed. Then, fully fund implementation of the national passenger rail system – with its new efficiencies, innovation and responsiveness – in subsequent years.

Attachment: List of Signatories

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

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