

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2015

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
H-307, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price:

As you begin work on the Subcommittee's Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations bill, we strongly urge you to support intercity passenger rail investments that build upon investments into a national high-speed rail network and improved passenger rail service throughout the country. Bold investments in our nation's passenger rail infrastructure will help us build a foundation for a stronger future and compete in the global economy.

Passenger rail is vital to the success of our country. It promotes economic growth, creates jobs, and fosters urban and rural community development. For instance, each \$1 billion of high-speed and passenger rail construction funding generates 24,000 jobs. Passenger rail investment also creates short-term jobs in construction and long-term jobs in ongoing maintenance, operation, and manufacturing. Further, passenger rail provides access to economic centers for communities across the country.

Amtrak provided service for a 30.9 million passengers in fiscal year 2014, setting ridership records on the Northeast Corridor and a number of other routes. Amtrak serves more than 500 communities – and 40% of America's rural population - in 46 states with more than 300 trains. Passenger rail also provides commuters relief from rising gas prices and eases our dependence on foreign oil.

In addition, passenger and freight rail lines have a statutory requirement to install positive train control systems (PTC) on rail lines that carry passengers or toxic-by-inhalation hazardous materials by December 31, 2015. The Department of Transportation has indicated that most railroads will not be able to meet that statutory deadline. Financial assistance is critical in order to ensure that this important safety technology is implemented. A spate of recent accidents involving railroad crossings and shipments of crude oil show why it is critical that we invest in rail network safety.

Congress has shown bipartisan support for passenger rail investment. In 2008, President George W. Bush signed into law the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), which had significant bipartisan support in the House and Senate. We support modernizing PRIIA in

line with the intercity passenger rail initiatives requested in President Obama's fiscal year 2016 budget, including:

- **Current Passenger Rail Service:** \$2.45 billion to provide grants to Amtrak and state corridors to ensure passenger rail assets are maintained to provide safe and reliable life-cycle service, as well as to continue operating long-distance train services.
- **Rail Service Improvement Program:** \$2.325 billion to provide competitive grants to drive development of high-performing passenger rail networks. This will include funding for the implementation of PTC for commuter railroads, support for the mitigation of adverse impacts associated with rail operations in local communities, upgrades for short-line freight operations, and local and regional planning efforts.

We acknowledge that this year's budget decisions are difficult, but we urge you to support strong investment in our nation's intercity passenger rail programs. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress
Co-Chair Bicameral HSIPR Caucus



Corrine Brown
Member of Congress
Co-Chair Bicameral HSIPR Caucus



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress
Co-Chair Bicameral HSIPR Caucus



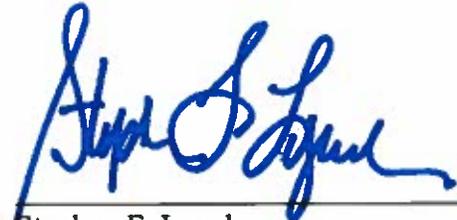
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Member of Congress
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Member of Congress
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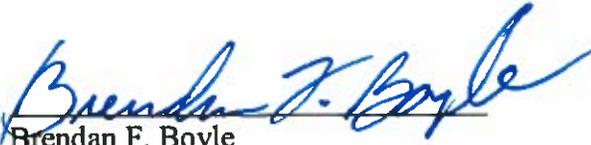
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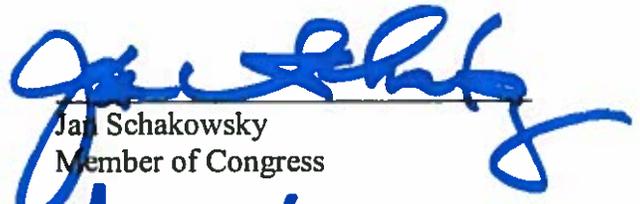

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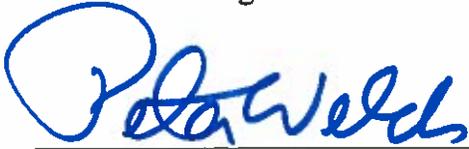
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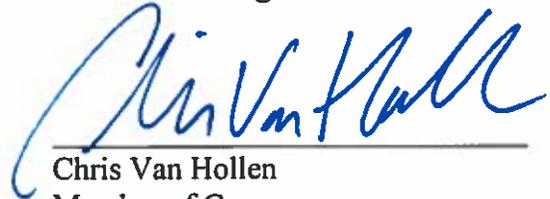
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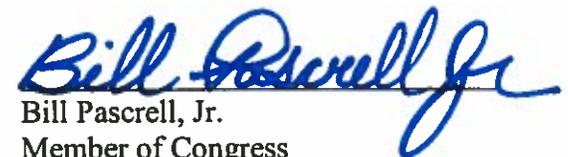
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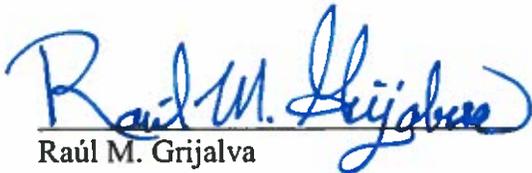
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