



Rail Passengers Association Fiscal Year 2021 Legislative Grant Request

With a record 32.5 million Amtrak passengers carried in 2019, a record 499 million passenger trips for commuter rail, and rail transit systems struggling to deal with the number of passengers, Rail Passengers Association is asking Congress to continue funding rail transportation at or above the levels provided in the Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations Bill.

Program	Federal rail funding (in millions)	
	FY2020 Appropriated Levels	Rail Passengers FY2021 Proposal
Amtrak - National Network	\$1,300.0	\$1,326.0
Amtrak - Corridor Dev. Program	N/A	\$300
Amtrak – NEC	\$700.0	\$714.0
Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Grants	\$325.0	\$375.0
Federal State Partnership for State of Good Repair	\$200.0	\$500.0
Restoration & Enhancement Grants	\$2.0	\$50.0
Total	\$2,527.0	\$3,265.0

Coronavirus Financial Aid: Ensure financial solvency of passenger rail and public transit operators in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. Information on the needs of operators: RailPassengers.org/COVID19.

Advance Appropriations: Predictable, dedicated funding will be necessary in the long-term for a healthy passenger rail system in the U.S. In the absence of a trust fund, *Rail Passengers* is asking Congress to provide advance appropriations for passenger rail grants, which would improve the ability of Amtrak and states to plan capital expenditures and manage infrastructure projects.

Strengthen CRISI: Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grants should consider benefit to passenger rail in determining project selection. *Rail Passengers* supports expanding 49 USC 22907(e) by simply adding passenger rail as a priority consideration and does not make changes to any of the other considerations or eligibilities.

Transit + Innovative Infrastructure Financing

- **Transit Formula Grants:** U.S. transit systems face \$86 billion in deferred maintenance and replacement needs, with 25% of rail transit assets in marginal or poor condition. *Rail Passengers* is asking Congress to match FAST Act authorized funding levels of \$11.4 billion for transit formula grants in Fiscal 2021.
- **Capital Investment Grants:** While state of good repair is critical, a growing U.S. population is resettling along dense metropolitan corridors. *Rail Passengers* is asking Congress to provide at least \$3.8 billion for the New Starts program in Fiscal 2021.
- **WMATA Transit Grants:** Match FY2020 funding of \$150 million for the WMATA system in FY2021.

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- **BUILD Grants:** *Rail Passengers* asks Congress to match its Fiscal 2020 funding levels of \$1.5 billion for the BUILD/TIGER Grants program for Fiscal 2021, and mandate that the U.S. DOT direct at least 2/3rds of the grants towards projects in high-capacity corridors.

Equipment

Amtrak is well into the procurement process for the new Northeast Corridor fleet (ACELA 2021); safer, more energy-efficient next-generation diesel locomotives to replace the aging National Network locomotive fleet; and has issued a Request for Proposals for new single-level equipment to replace Amfleet I cars on the Northeast Corridor and neighboring State-Supported services. However, there is still a long way to go towards fleet modernization. *Rail Passengers* is asking Congress to work with States and Amtrak to establish a stable funding mechanism to allow for critical investments in equipment that will meet public demand for reliable, energy-efficient equipment with modern amenities, and flexible deployment capabilities. In particular, we encourage the full funding of Amtrak's FY2021 legislative grant request for new equipment for the National Network and the NEC ([Table 8](#)).

Legislative Proposals

- **Enshrine National Network Service:** Recognize the importance of on-time performance to the long-term viability of the National Network as a guiding principal for passenger rail investment in the surface transportation authorizing law; require Amtrak to provide train frequencies not less than what is currently being offered to all existing Amtrak routes.
- **Rail Passenger Fairness Act (S.2922)** Given the dramatic rise in host railroad interference and passenger delays, *Rail Passengers* is asking Congress to grant Amtrak a Private Right of Action to enforce existing dispatching preference.
- **Food & Beverage Reform Act:** Reforms Congressional oversight of food and beverage on Amtrak trains by eliminating onerous provisions threatening the stability of National Network service.
- **Increase Amtrak Transparency and Oversight:** Given the dramatic increase in Amtrak investment, we believe there is a greater need for transparency in Amtrak decision-making in its relationship with states and in its network planning. We request Amtrak report route financial performance on the basis of Avoidable Costs and increase transparency in the attribution of costs for state-supported service.
- **Invest in American Railroads Act (H.R.5947):** Reforms RRIF oversight and provides \$300 million per year in credit risk premiums, with no less than \$100 million for passenger rail projects.
- **Ending Passenger Rail Forced Arbitration Act (H.R. 6101):** Restores legal rights and protections to Amtrak passengers who are currently being forced into mandatory arbitration agreement when purchasing tickets.
- **Warren Cowles Grade Crossing Safety Act:** Adds an additional \$250 million to CRISI to be set aside for upgrading highway-rail grade crossing for commuter railroads and intercity operators in high-ridership corridors.
- **Provide increased funding for passenger rail:** There are several complementary proposals that offer promising strategies for rapidly deploying billions of dollars in investment to scale up construction and introduce new train service. H.R. 5805 proposes \$8 billion per year for the high-speed rail corridor development program. The **Amtrak Corridor Development Program** would allow Amtrak to rapidly launch new state-supported services by funding initial infrastructure costs while helping states cover operating costs for the first five years.
- **Process Improvements for Host Railroad Access for Additional Trains + Routes:** update and clarify federal law related to the process for determining the amount of capital investment needed to ensure any additional Amtrak trains do not unreasonably impair the host railroads. It is important that this process is expeditious and fair and cannot be abused by a freight railroad as a delay tactic for additional Amtrak trains.

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