



**Office of the President**  
Edward R. Hamberger  
President and Chief Executive Officer

March 2, 2015

Dear Representative:

This week, legislation to reauthorize our nation's passenger rail programs is scheduled to be on the House floor. H.R. 749, the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, passed unanimously out of the Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure without amendment.

The Association of American Railroads supports this bipartisan piece of legislation, as reported out of Committee. Passenger rail is an important part of our transportation system, and its success helps enhance the entire railroad network. In particular, we support provisions that:

- Require the U.S. Department of Transportation to streamline the review, permitting, and approval or disapproval of freight, passenger, and some commuter railroad infrastructure projects. This includes concurrent reviews and deadlines for decisions, which federal highway and transit projects have long enjoyed. We strongly support extending these permitting reforms to rail projects.
- Provide that U.S. DOT implement a streamlined compliance process for railroad corridors under the National Historic Preservation Act. In some states, historic preservation proponents have sought to deem "historic" entire railroad corridors, making it impossible for railroads to make the needed capital upgrades to move the Nation's freight. This provision will significantly improve our ability to invest in our corridors, while preserving truly historic structures.
- Authorize \$300 million a year in intercity passenger rail grants, to upgrade railroad infrastructure to improve passenger rail performance. Given that the majority of passenger rail services operate over private freight rail lines, it is important to enable Amtrak to pay for its infrastructure requirements on freight rail lines.

H.R. 749 makes important programmatic reforms to create a more efficient and viable Amtrak system, and also takes steps to address what is often an overly burdensome permitting process for rail infrastructure projects. The Association of American Railroads appreciates the consideration of this bipartisan legislation and, for the reasons above, urges you to vote "Yes" when H.R. 749 comes to the floor.

Sincerely,



Edward Hamberger  
President and CEO