



FULLY FUND AMTRAK AND SUPPORT U.S. PASSENGER RAIL

SUPPORT FULL AMTRAK FUNDING IN FY26:

REQUEST: *Support Amtrak's fully authorized amount of \$4.0B in FY26*

- Amtrak set a ridership record in 2024 with 32.8 million customers and is on track to surpass it in 2025.
- Ridership is projected to reach 66 million by 2040, requiring funding to meet demand and expand operations.
- Currently, Amtrak is only funded to barely meet their base needs and carry out core functions - operate trains, maintain facilities and infrastructure, and avoid long-term deterioration of infrastructure and equipment.
- Amtrak needs more funding to add more trains and improve and expand services to more communities in the U.S.
- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provided \$4.5B for infrastructure upgrades, but Amtrak is prohibited from using these funds for operations.

FIGHT AMTRAK PRIVATIZATION EFFORTS

REQUEST: *Oppose any efforts to privatize Amtrak*

- Proposals to privatize Amtrak are not supported by any facts, history, and basic economics.
- Critics often draw unfair comparisons to China's high-speed rail (HSR). China spent \$117 billion just last year on HSR - more than all Amtrak's 50-year funding combined.
- Rail privatization has failed elsewhere, notably in Britain, where it led to higher fares, reduced service, and route abandonment, forcing a return to public ownership in 2024.
- Amtrak needs stable, long-term funding – even “private” successes like Brightline depend on billions in public subsidies.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FUNDING EFFORTS

CURRENT SITUATION:

- *Expiration of Pandemic Relief Funds:* The significant federal aid provided to transit agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic, which helped maintain essential services amidst plummeting ridership, is nearing exhaustion.
- *Persistent Ridership Challenges:* While ridership has rebounded from pandemic lows, it remains significantly below pre-pandemic levels in many areas. This lag in ridership recovery directly impacts fare revenue, a crucial component of transit agencies' operating budgets.
- *Rising Operating Costs:* Transit agencies face increasing costs related to labor, fuel, maintenance of aging infrastructure, and the need to adapt to evolving service demands and technological advancements. Operational expenditures grew by 50% between 2002 and 2022, outpacing service growth.
- *Deferred Maintenance Backlog:* Years of underinvestment have created a substantial backlog in necessary maintenance and capital projects, estimated at \$152 billion over the next ten years. Delaying these investments will lead to system deterioration, service disruptions, and higher costs in the long run. Over 40% of America's buses and 25% of rail transit assets are in marginal or poor condition.
- *Potential Service Cuts and Fare Increases:* Without adequate funding, transit agencies will be forced to make difficult choices, including reducing service frequency and routes, increasing fares, and delaying or canceling critical capital projects.

REQUEST:

- *Robust and Sustainable Federal Funding:* Ensure a dedicated, reliable, and growing stream of federal funding for public transportation, encompassing both capital and operating expenses.
- *Increased Flexibility in Federal Funding:* Provide transit agencies with greater flexibility to utilize federal funds for operating expenses, recognizing the ongoing ridership and revenue recovery challenges. Current federal policy has historically focused on capital expenses.
- *Prioritize Transit in Infrastructure Spending:* Ensure public transportation receives a fair and equitable share of overall infrastructure investments, recognizing its critical role in a balanced and sustainable transportation system.
- *Support Innovative Funding Mechanisms:* Encourage and support the exploration of diverse and innovative funding sources at the federal, state, and local levels, such as dedicated taxes, transportation-related fees, and value capture mechanisms.
- *Invest in Workforce Development:* Address the looming workforce challenges in the transit industry by supporting programs that attract, train, and retain qualified transit professionals. Nearly 38% of transit workers are over 55, indicating future staffing problems.