

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer:

Thank you for your leadership in ensuring that the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act included relief for passenger rail and transit agencies impacted by increased costs and decreased revenues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the signatories below raised these concerns in a letter to you on March 20, 2020, and were relieved by your inclusion of \$1 billion for Amtrak and \$25 billion for transit. We write to you again today to urge you to include additional relief in another relief package and/or in Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations for these critical elements of our national transportation infrastructure.

Despite relief provided in the CARES Act, Amtrak and transit agencies are reporting additional need in the short and medium term. In many instances, even the alarming projections four months ago underestimated actual revenue declines, and in addition, the oil market collapse has driven down gas tax receipts. In fact, the 10 largest transit regions only estimated CARES Act relief would cover agency shortfalls for 5.4 to 8.3 months.<sup>1</sup> The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) along with participating transit agencies estimate that at least \$32 billion to \$36 billion is needed for transit emergency response funding, including addressing commuter rail service needs, through calendar year 2021.

Initial Amtrak estimates calculated the need for at least \$1.6 billion in additional federal support, primarily for additional station and railcar sanitization measures in the midst of decreased revenues both from Amtrak passengers and its state and commuter partners in FY21. This initial estimate has proven too low, and Amtrak now supports the \$8 billion of relief to Amtrak

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<sup>1</sup> <https://transitcenter.org/cares-act-funding-will-last-half-as-long-for-large-u-s-transit-regions-compared-to-other-areas/>

included in the House FY21 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill. Furthermore, rail workers, transit workers, and other essential critical infrastructure workers are at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 as a result of the essential service they provide, and must be protected in future legislation.

Significant action now can help prevent calamity later as rail and transit agencies continue to provide essential service. We request the following in a relief package or FY 21 appropriations:

- \$8 billion in federal support for COVID-19-related impacts for Amtrak and its state and commuter partners in FY21 to help retain long-distance train frequencies and prevent furloughs;
- At least \$32 billion for transit emergency response funding through calendar year 2021; and
- Priority access to testing, personal protective equipment, sanitizers, non-medical grade facial coverings, and other health-related or protective supplies necessary for rail, transit, and other essential critical infrastructure workers.

Without additional relief, Amtrak and transit agencies, which provide essential transportation services for workers on the front lines of this pandemic, may need to consider service cuts, station closures, layoffs, or suspending planned projects in addition to ensuring operations can be ramped up in the aftermath of the immediate public health crisis. We recognize that passenger rail and transit are two among many priorities we must continue to address, and urge you to ensure they are supported in subsequent legislation to mitigate the economic impact of this pandemic.

Sincerely,

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SETH MOULTON  
*Member of Congress*

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BRIAN FITZPATRICK  
*Member of Congress*

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TOM MALINOWSKI  
*Member of Congress*

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JEFF VAN DREW  
*Member of Congress*

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JOSEPH D. MORELLE  
*Member of Congress*

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PETER T. KING  
*Member of Congress*

JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA  
*Member of Congress*

ROBIN L. KELLY  
*Member of Congress*

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*Member of Congress*

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RICK LARSEN  
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*Member of Congress*

DWIGHT EVANS  
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BILL FOSTER  
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ANDY KIM  
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CHELLIE PINGREE  
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JAMIE RASKIN  
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PETER WELCH  
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LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER  
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JAMES P. McGOVERN  
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JULIA BROWNLEY  
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JOE NEGUSE  
*Member of Congress*

JIM COSTA  
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JUDY CHU  
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