



The House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

Chairman Peter A. DeFazio

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Chairs DeFazio and Lipinski Statements on Amtrak Announcing Furloughs of Over 2,000 Workers Due to COVID-19 Crisis

Washington, DC – Chair of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Chair of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) issued the following statements in response to the news that Amtrak will furlough over 2,000 workers due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as part of its Fiscal Year 2021 Workforce Plan:

“This week, another 2,000 workers learned that they will be losing their jobs due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. This time it is largely Amtrak employees who operate trains, provide onboard services, and support passengers who will bear the brunt of this administration’s failure to lead the country during this pandemic. The jobs at the center of today’s announcement are good paying, union jobs that sustain middle class families and will be difficult to replace, especially in a time of sky-high unemployment,” **said Chair DeFazio**. “In July, I led the House in passing the Moving Forward Act, which tripled funding for Amtrak to nearly \$29 billion. Later that month, the House also approved transportation appropriations legislation that provided \$10 billion for Amtrak, including emergency appropriations that contained protections to prevent the furloughing of workers. In fact, our Committee will soon be hearing from workers who are impacted by these furloughs. It’s time for Republicans in the Senate to stop sitting on these important bills and do their job to protect Amtrak employees and so many others currently in need.”

“Amtrak’s announcement that they will furlough over 2,000 employees is disappointing and unacceptable. Amtrak received nearly \$1 billion in CARES Act funding with the directive from Congress that they would use the funds to help prevent furloughs. Amtrak has had months to come to Congress and request additional funds if money was needed to help keep workers on the payroll. Amtrak workers provide an essential service to travelers and communities. These workers deserve better from Amtrak leadership. Congress needs to act quickly to prevent furloughs and avoid long distance service cuts. Yesterday’s announcement only heightens the need for action by Congress. As chairman of the Rail Subcommittee I will be holding a hearing next week where I will raise these issues with Amtrak CEO William Flynn. The subcommittee will also hear from workers and passengers affected by Amtrak’s actions,” **Chair Lipinski said**.

Additional information:

In November 2019, the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials held a hearing titled “Amtrak Now and Into the Future” where the Committee heard from then-President and CEO of Amtrak Richard Anderson, as well as labor and local stakeholders, on the priorities of Amtrak going forward. To watch the full hearing and read witness testimony, click [here](#).