

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 5, 2019

Mr. Richard Anderson
President
Amtrak
1 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Anderson:

We are writing in strong support of Amtrak's national network, including the long-distance and state-supported routes. These routes serve small, midsize, and rural communities in our states and provide essential connections to jobs, tourism, and family that are critical to the people and places we represent. As you develop Amtrak's plan for the long-term viability of the company, we urge you to recognize the critical importance of the entire national network, which includes the long-distance and state-supported routes. Once again, we seek your firm commitment that Amtrak will abide by its statutory purpose – maintaining a truly national network for our rail system.

Amtrak's recent appropriation clearly demonstrates Congress' strong, bipartisan support for the network. In making this investment, Congress chose to ensure the continued viability of Amtrak's entire system, including the National Network's long-distance and state-supported routes. These funds should be used to operate the entire existing system and, where possible, expand the system to grow both revenue and ridership.

Congress purposely created a national network of long-distance and state-supported train service throughout the nation, in recognition of the importance of a transportation system that reaches every community – regardless of how rural it may be. Amtrak is more than a collection of individual train routes; it is a web of essential connections that bind our country together and link rural communities with major markets and economic opportunities. It provides residents of these communities with transportation options on which families, seniors, and businesses rely to access jobs, create economic opportunities, see our beautiful country, and visit family. The federal investment in Amtrak ensures the small, midsize, and rural communities served by Amtrak's long-distance and state-supported routes continue to receive this essential service.

The long-distance and state-supported routes of the national system are no less important than the Northeast Corridor (NEC), another critical aspect of Amtrak service.

The long distance and state supported trains generate more ridership than the NEC and similar levels of revenue. Many long-distance sleeper cars are regularly sold out. The entire national network helps cover Amtrak's fixed corporate costs such as police, facilities and capital expenditures, particularly when the route shares trackage with the NEC. Continuing and expanding the entire national system of long-distance and state-supported routes is both good for Amtrak's business, and our national economy.

We look forward to working with you and receiving assurances of your commitment to the national network. For these reasons, we request your response to the following questions by April 29, 2019.

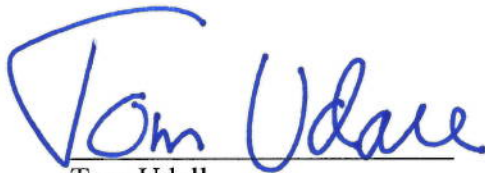
- Amtrak customers have already experienced a deterioration in service as Amtrak pursues efficiencies. A recent report in *Trains Magazine*¹ indicated that Amtrak utilizes accounting mechanisms to inflate costs associated with the national network, by charging long-distance and state-supported routes for costs which may be more appropriately charged to the Northeast Corridor. We are concerned that Amtrak's accounting is intentionally obscure and is causing a false inflation of costs of lines outside of the Northeast Corridor. Please provide the accounting methods used to determine the costs referenced.
- Does Amtrak plan to truncate or otherwise alter any of the long-distance train routes? If yes, then:
 - Which routes are under consideration for alteration?
 - Would any of these routes be altered in such a way that they would fall under the definition of State Supported routes, requiring states to find local operating funds for existing service? What discussions has Amtrak had with states, if any, that lead it to believe states would be willing to assume this financial obligation?
- Amtrak says it wants to introduce new short distance routes with daytime service and multiple frequencies. What specific routes is Amtrak considering? What discussions—if any—has Amtrak had with host railroads, stakeholders, or government officials regarding these additional frequencies?
- Amtrak claims that public demand for its long-distance interstate service is declining. Yet the number of passengers using the total long-distance network in FY 2017—the last year without major service interruptions—was 10.6% higher than it was eight years earlier in FY 2010. It was also higher than in all but three of the last eight years. This growth occurred in spite of worsening on time performance, capacity reductions and other changes to service levels. On what basis does Amtrak claim that demand is declining for long-distance trains?

¹ http://trn.trains.com/bonus/amtrak?utm_source=Yesmail&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=News0_TRN_190115_00000

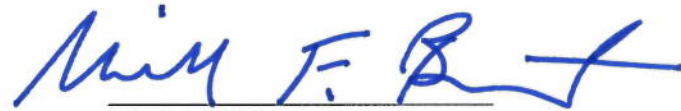
- Amtrak has made a number of changes impacting long-distance routes in 2018 that may reduce revenues and services, such as the removal of ticket agents at a number of stations across the country. Why did Amtrak calculate ridership totals based on weekly boardings on routes that do not run daily? When will Amtrak restore or otherwise alter assistance it provides passengers at stations based on Congressional directives in the Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations Act?
- Amtrak has expressed concern at how the dispatching practices of some host railroads has led to deteriorating on-time performance (OTP). Does Amtrak have a strategy to improve OTP and better interface with the host railroads? Are there policies that would assist Amtrak in this endeavor?
- Sleeper cars provide approximately 40-50% of the revenue on many long-distance trains. Please provide us with an update on the 25 sleeper cars that were scheduled to be delivered in 2015 and 2016. Please provide a timeline for completing this order and putting the new cars into service?

Our constituents – in both large and small communities rely on Amtrak service. We look forward to continue to work with you to preserve and expand the long-distance and state-supported routes, and to reviewing your response to our questions.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Pat Roberts
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Jerry Moran
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



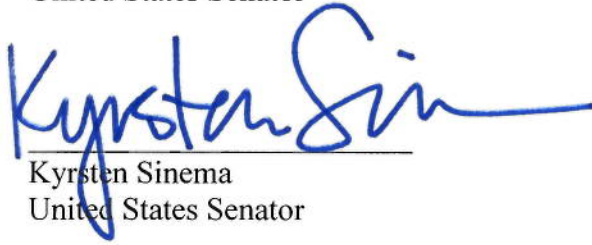
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator