



December 3, 2018

Mr. Jim Mathews
President & CEO
Rail Passengers Association
1200 G Street, NW, Suite 240
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Mathews:

Thank you for your October 26, 2018 letter regarding the unique opportunities before Amtrak created by the confluence of strong demand, changing demographics, aging fleet and the upcoming reauthorization of the Federal intercity rail programs, including Amtrak. We appreciate RPA's views on the various measures outlined within your letter that you believe Amtrak should support or adopt regarding train frequencies, rolling stock and infrastructure investment, enhanced customer service, and host relations. Your suggestions align closely with several efforts currently underway at Amtrak, some of which I have outlined below:

- Vision for growth, rolling stock, and safety – As we examine potential new and expanded passenger rail service, Amtrak is looking closely at population growth and changing demographics, traffic congestion, and recent consumer behaviors. These factors all indicate intercity passenger rail has a bright future. However, given limited resources, it is critical that we target the American taxpayers' funds to the places where intercity passenger rail offers the most relevant solutions for our current and potential customers.

As you are aware, several of our fleets are close to the end of their useful lives; therefore, Amtrak has begun formulating a comprehensive fleet strategy and is now taking critical steps toward reflecting both on the Northeast Corridor and the National Network. This includes: a new generation of high speed trainsets scheduled for introduction on the NEC in 2021; finalizing new diesel locomotive procurement to replace our aged P40 and P42 locomotives; exploring the passenger rail market through a RFI for the replacement of the 40-year-old Amfleet I's; and the continued refresh of the interiors of our equipment, such as new cushions and covers for all seats, new carpet, and a deep clean to ensure a more modern and comfortable customer experience. Further, we will soon begin to evaluate the appropriate strategy for our bi-level equipment; your thoughts and recommendations on this important topic would be greatly appreciated.



You are right to point out the central importance of safety. Operating a safe railroad is our most fundamental goal, and it is the prerequisite for everything else we hope to achieve. We are working on building a safety-focused organization that embodies a Just Culture approach to safety compliance and enforcement. We will rely on our Safety Management System (SMS) and our industry-leading System Safety Plan to help ensure safe and reliable passenger rail service for our customers. We are also focused on modernizing our safety training through the incorporation of new and innovative training systems to make sure our crews are the best trained railroaders in the industry. In addition, Positive Train Control is a critical part of our safety strategy and a fundamental technology that we believe should be present for all of our operations. I'm pleased to report that PTC will be function on roughly 16,000 miles of the host railroad network used by our trains and on nearly all Amtrak-owned or controlled track by the end of this year.

- Embrace customers – As noted above, we have begun to examine a comprehensive refleet strategy, and you can rest assured that our new equipment will dramatically improve the experience for our customers. Beyond the fleet, as you are well aware, Amtrak has basically offered the same on-board service model since 1971. To meet the increasingly dynamic preferences of our patrons, which include generations with differing views on what shapes the ideal customer experience, we are actively finding ways to update our services, such as food and beverage, reservations, ticketing, and trip planning. Our customers are telling us they want expanded options, while Congress has directed us to deliver these services more efficiently. We're looking for innovations that will allow riders to make choices before and during their travel. We're continuing to evaluate new equipment and products that can be used to prepare and serve food more quickly onboard. We're also exploring concepts where we could partner with local businesses that could potentially provide "to go" food service options where dwell times and/or technology make that practical. Innovations in technology make new things possible, and we are optimistic about how this can improve the experience for our passengers.
- Daily service – You've raise valid concerns about thrice-weekly service which is consistent with the Company's own view as set forth in our PRIIA-required Route Improvement Plans. We are looking again at the opportunity for daily service for both the *Cardinal* and the *Sunset Limited*. Of course, to do so will require reasonable cooperation from our Host Railroads and available equipment.



- Engage creatively with state, locals, and private partners – We are eager to grow and expand service to currently underserved cities, corridors, and communities across the country. States from coast to coast have expressed interest in new routes and additional frequencies. We are hopeful there will be opportunities for expansion onto new routes in places like Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois. To that end, we are aggressively working to set up meetings with the transition teams for new Governors recently elected. With regards to the ongoing work to establish a New Orleans to Mobile service, we continue to work with the Southern Rail Commission to advance planning and funding options for corridor service. As you may be aware, Amtrak contributed a match to the SRC's October CRISI grant application to begin infrastructure investment. In the meantime, Amtrak's Host Railroad Group is working with CSX to "fast track" the remaining study work. We remain committed to working with leaders in the region to implement this service.
- Host railroads and regulators – I completely agree with you on the importance of engaging "in an open conversation with host railroads and regulators" and Amtrak considers its current OTP challenges, including freight train interference, as an existential threat to the service we provide to our customers. Amtrak continues to look for opportunities to collaborate with its hosts, as well as work closely with the U.S. Department of Transportation and Congress to ensure they understand how poor OTP threatens the viability of the National Network.
- Private Right of Action – You are absolutely correct that Amtrak needs an effective tool to hold host railroads accountable for poor OTP, and we will continue to ask Congress for a private right of action.

Thank you again for the careful thought and genuine passion reflected within your letter. Amtrak's Board and the executive management team join me when I say I share your optimism about Amtrak's importance to this nation and its transportation network, both now and in the future. We look forward to continuing to have an open and collaborative dialogue with you and your members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Coscia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony Coscia