

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 3, 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Vice Chairman
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman
Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Ranking Member
Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Vice Chairman Cochran, Chairman Murray, and Ranking Member Collins:

We write to express our serious concern about the funding cuts to and rescission of the High Speed Rail Corridors and Intercity Passenger Rail Service and Amtrak grant programs that the House of Representatives passed as part of H.R. 1. As you develop the Senate's version of a continuing resolution to fund the Federal government, we urge you to reject these cuts and rescissions.

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) created clear direction for improving Amtrak's operations and the framework for development of a broader high speed and intercity passenger rail network. Since that time, the Administration and Amtrak have been working aggressively to implement PRIIA's requirements and have made substantial progress.

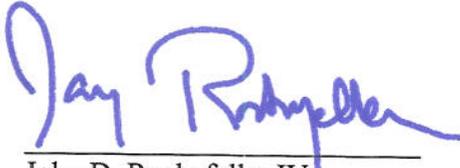
These programs and the projects that they fund will directly create several thousands of jobs in the short-term, support even more jobs in the long-term, encourage economic development, and vastly improve our transportation network. Congress must continue to provide the support we pledged in PRIIA to maintain progress toward these goals.

For the funding that Congress has provided to the PRIIA passenger rail grant programs since 2008 in annual appropriations and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Administration received an overwhelming number of applications. To date, it has competitively awarded all of the funds Congress had provided for these programs and completed the steps necessary to obligate a significant portion of those funds. The recipients have relied on the Administration's funding commitments to take the important steps to get these projects underway.

Amtrak has also diligently worked to implement the PRIIA provision by reducing its debt service needs, improving its equipment fleet, upgrading its long-distance services, and bringing stations and equipment into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Amtrak has been conscientious in meeting the deadlines under PRIIA to realize the vision that Congress set for its future. Reducing funding of Amtrak's capital and operating expenses to the House-passed levels would require Amtrak to furlough employees and negatively impact Amtrak's ability to maintain its current service levels, operate safely, and comply with the requirements set forth in PRIIA.

As you begin consideration of the continuing resolution, we urge you to reject the House's cuts and rescissions and to maintain the funding provided to Amtrak and the passenger rail programs. We appreciate your consistent support of Amtrak and the passenger rail programs and look forward to working with you on this important issue. Thank you for your consideration.

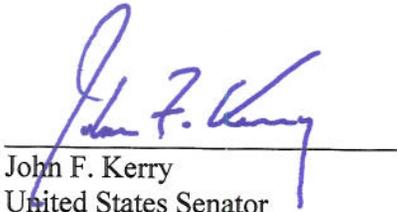
Sincerely,



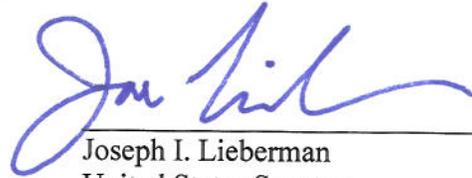
John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senator



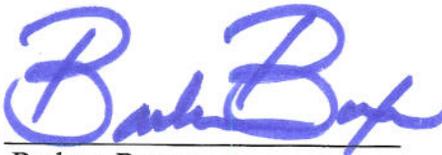
Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senator



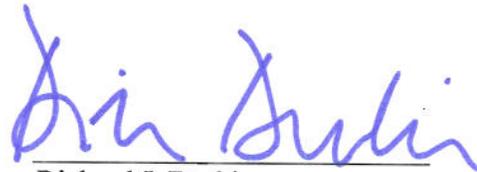
John F. Kerry
United States Senator



Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



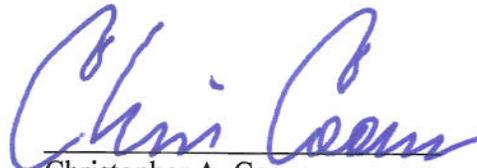
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator