



Rail Passengers Association Fiscal Year 2023 Legislative Grant Request

The passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has launched a new era for America’s rail passengers. The Investment in Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA) establishes several important new passenger rail programs and, for the first time, provides ambitious, multi-year federal funding for the upgrade and expansion of the national intercity passenger rail network.

There will be challenges in implementing the BIL’s rail title, as well as restoring passenger rail service to pre-pandemic levels. Importantly, the funding that the BIL provides to Amtrak is reserved for specific uses, so achieving that restoration will require robust annual grant funding for the company’s Northeast Corridor and the National Network accounts. The Rail Passengers Association is committed to working with Congress to provide effective oversight of new and expanded passenger rail programs and ensure that appropriators fully fund rail programs at the authorized levels established by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Fiscal Year 2023 Funding (Millions)																																		
National Network Funding \$9.315 Billion	Multipurpose Funding (Could benefit NN, NEC and/or neither) \$4.02 Billion	Northeast Corridor Funding \$6.215 Billion																																
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Congressional Oversight of the USDOT and Amtrak

– **Restoration of Levels of Service on Amtrak Routes:** Amtrak announced early this year that, due to labor shortages and the Omicron surge, it would be temporarily reducing service. Standard service levels were originally scheduled to resume March 28, but delays have been extended indefinitely. The disruption to Amtrak service will affect hundreds of (primarily rural)

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communities. Congressional intent on the need to continue service at existing levels—at the *minimum*—has been clearly established in the IIJA and in federal budgets and pandemic aid bills. *Rail Passengers* requests that Congress use its oversight powers to ensure Amtrak publicly issues a plan and clear timeline for the full restoration of State-supported and Long-Distance service.

– **Amtrak Board of Directors**: There are currently two vacancies and six expired seats on Amtrak’s Board of Directors. We ask the Congress to work with the Biden Administration to nominate a new slate of Directors that—as required by Congress in the IIJA—provide balanced regional representation, speaking for both rural and urban passengers.

– **National Fleet Renewal**: Amtrak has launched the procurement process for next generation equipment, beginning with the new Northeast Corridor fleet (ACELA 2021); safer, more energy-efficient next-generation diesel locomotives to replace the aging National Network locomotive fleet; and the award of a contract for new single-level equipment to Siemens to replace Amfleet I cars on the Northeast Corridor and neighboring State-Supported services. However, there is still a long way to go towards fleet modernization. *Rail Passengers* is asking Congress to fully fund BIL at the FY2023 authorized levels to assist in the purchase of new equipment for the National Network and the NEC.

– **Speed Project Delivery**: It is imperative that the IIJA deliver tangible benefits to America’s passengers in the near term. There are several corridors where the USDOT could speed delivery of funds by endorsing previously released capital investment plans. We ask Congress to push the USDOT to use these pre-existing blueprints to award IIJA funds, and to publish the Northeast Corridor Inventory as soon as possible to advance critical NEC projects.

Legislative Policy Proposals

The IIJA included several passenger rail policy reforms. However, there are still key policy provisions that need to be enacted to allow for the effective and efficient implementation of the bipartisan infrastructure law:

– **On-Time Performance and Fairness for Passengers**: Given the dramatic rise in host railroad interference and passenger delays, *Rail Passengers* is asking Congress to grant preference enforcement. This would give Amtrak the ability to bring an action in U.S. District Court when its statutory right of preference is violated, protecting American passengers’ right to be on time by ensuring they aren’t stranded illegally for hours behind slow-moving freight trains. *Rail Passengers* supports passage of the Payne/Durbin Rail Passenger Fairness Act [H.R. 2937/S. 1500].

– **Passenger Rail Trust Fund**: *Rail Passengers* supports passage of the Davis/Blumenthal Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund Act [H.R. 2769/S. 899] to provide predictable, dedicated funding for passenger rail. While the Highway and Transit programs provide federal formula funding to states, the intercity passenger rail program depends on time-consuming and uncertain discretionary grant programs which prevent efficient planning and delay the start of projects. With advance appropriations for passenger rail grants, Amtrak and states can more effectively plan multi-year capital programs and manage large projects.

– **Update and clarify the procedure for Amtrak to access host railroad infrastructure** to ensure a fair process for determining the amount of capital investment needed to ensure any additional Amtrak trains do not unreasonably impair the host railroads.

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