



RAIL PASSENGERS
ASSOCIATION

RailNation:DC 2023

Day on the Hill Preparation

March 27, 2023

Sean Jeans-Gail | VP of Gov't Affairs

Rail Passengers Association



Senate Office Buildings

- Hart
- Dirksen
- Russell
- **Cafeteria:** Dirksen, Russell (carry-out)
- **Metro:** Union Station (red)

House Office Buildings

- Cannon (100)
- Longworth (1100)
- Rayburn (2100)
- **Cafeteria:** Longworth, Rayburn
- **Metro:** Capitol South (orange/blue)

FY24 Legislative Request



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Rail Passengers Association Fiscal Year 2024 Legislative Grant Request

The passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) has introduced a new era for America's rail passengers, launching several important new passenger rail programs and providing guaranteed multi-year federal funding to upgrade and expand the national passenger rail network.

Rail Passengers is committed to working with Congress to ensure there is meaningful oversight on these newly expanded passenger rail programs and on Amtrak operations. There will be significant challenges to efficiently ramping up capital investment programs—for the Federal Railroad Administration, for Amtrak, and for States—including workforce shortages, supply chain challenges and domestic manufacturing constraints.

BIL funding can only be used for certain purposes and was never meant to replace Amtrak's annual appropriations. Providing sufficient FY24 funding is necessary to allow Amtrak to operate trains and restore full service (find out more about ridership trends at RailPassengers.org/Ridership), perform annual maintenance and carry out core functions to avoid long-term deterioration of assets and services, and make targeted, high-priority investments for future expansion. *Rail Passengers* is asking Congress to fully fund rail programs at the authorized levels established by the BIL.

	FY23 Enacted	FY24 IJIA Authorized
Amtrak	\$2,453 ML	\$3,650 ML
<i>Northeast Corridor</i>	\$1,260 ML	\$1,200 ML
<i>National Network</i>	\$1,193 ML	\$2,450 ML
Federal Railroad Administration	\$251 ML	\$263 ML
Federal-State Partnership for ICPR	\$100 ML	\$1,500 ML
CRISI Grants	\$535 ML	\$1,000 ML
Railroad Crossing Elimination Grants	\$0	\$500 ML
Restoration & Enhancement Grants	\$0	\$50 ML

Improve Amtrak Transparency and Oversight

Rail Passengers supports legislative initiatives which will improve Amtrak responsiveness to passengers and increase transparency for taxpayers:

- Require Amtrak's Board of Directors to comply with standard open meeting requirements;
- Expand Amtrak's Board of Directors annual meeting requirements to include meetings with representatives of state-supported services;

- Require Amtrak's Board of Directors to publicly disclose any bonus payment made to an Amtrak officer in a year which Amtrak receives federal grants;
- Require Amtrak to disclose certain vendor agreements utilized to provide intercity rail service to state-sponsors or the State-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee (SAIPRC) upon request.

Address Amtrak Board of Directors Vacancies: There are currently two vacancies and six expired seats on Amtrak's Board of Directors. We ask that Congress work with the White House to advance a slate of Directors that—as required by Congress in the BIL—provides balanced regional representation, speaking for both rural and urban passengers.

Holding Freight Railroads Accountable

Railway Safety Act of 2023: *Rail Passengers* supports the bipartisan push to Railway Safety Act improve freight rail safety by capping train lengths for certain cargo, mandating two-person crews, increasing financial penalties for violations, and improving oversight and reporting.

On-Time Performance and Fairness for Passengers: Amtrak passengers have long been a "canary in the coal mine" for U.S. rail operations, with increasing freight-caused delays to Amtrak trains serving as a leading indicator of the decline in reliability and fluidity on our nation's rail network.

- **Freight train interference remains the number one cause of Amtrak delays**, with freight railroads causing 1,076,675 minutes of delay to passengers in 2022—equivalent to traveling to the moon and back 100 times!
- In 2022, **15 of the 15 Amtrak long-distance routes operating over freight rail tracks did not meet the minimum threshold of acceptable service** established by the Federal Railroad Administration Metrics & Standards (≥80% Customer On-Time Performance).
- **State corridor trains are impacted too.** One third of passengers on the *Cascades*, which operates between Seattle, WA and Eugene, OR, arrived late in 2022 due to Host Railroad delays.
- **These delays have real costs.** Amtrak's Inspector General has estimated that if Amtrak trains were able to operate reliably without freight train interference, Amtrak could realize annual savings of \$41.9 million, and one-time savings of \$336 million by reducing equipment replacement needs. This money—provided by America's passengers and taxpayers—could be invested in providing better Amtrak service.
- **The Surface Transportation Board is currently investigating substandard service by host railroad Union Pacific (UP) on Amtrak's *Sunset Limited* route** for consistently failing to meet the FRA's Metrics & Standards benchmarks. Customer On-Time Performance has dropped to 4.6 percent on the route, which serves residents of Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

How Can We Improve On-Time Performance? *Rail Passengers* is asking Members of Congress to apply pressure to Host Railroads for making their constituents late.

1. Freight railroads **must** fulfill their legal obligation to give priority dispatching to Amtrak trains.
2. Support the Rail Passenger Fairness Act to ensure passengers aren't stranded by the freight railroads.

For more information, please visit RailPassengers.org/Leg.Resources



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Rail Safety + OTP

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Amtrak Board

Amtrak Board of

Directors: There are two vacancies and six expired seats on Amtrak's Board of Directors. RPA is asking Congress to work with the White House to advance a slate of Directors that—as required by Congress in the BIL—provides balanced regional representation.

Member	Tenure	Pending Nominee
Pete Buttigieg	Ex officio	
Stephen Gardner	Ex officio	
Christopher Beall (R)	Expired Jan. 2018	
Yvonne Braithwaite Burke (D)	Expired Jan. 2018	Nominee: Robin Wiessmann (D)
Thomas C. Carper (D)	Expired Aug. 2018	Nominee: Chris Koos (D)
Anthony Coscia (D)	Expired Dec. 2020	Nominee: Anthony Coscia (D)
Albert DiClemente (D)	Expired Sept. 2017	Nominee: Samuel Lathem (D)
Jeffrey Moreland (R)	Expired June 2015	
Vacancy (was Derek Kan (R))	Expired Jan. 2021	Nominee: Joel Szabat (R)
Vacancy (never filled)		Nominee: David Capozzi (D)



Amtrak Transparency + Oversight

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Educational One-Pagers

Communicating the Benefits of Passenger Rail Investment

Rail Passengers 2023 One-Pagers



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Economic Benefits	Environmental Benefits	High-Speed Rail
National Network & Rural Links	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Benefits	Passenger Bill of Rights

RailPassengers.org/Leg.Resources

Refining Our Message



Preparing to rebut the anti-rail arguments:

- “Passenger rail only makes sense on the East Coast.”
- “The deficit is out of control; we can’t afford to spend money on passenger rail.”
- “We need to focus on *traditional* infrastructure like roads and bridges.”
- “High-speed rail doesn’t work in America. Just look at California.”
- **Others?**

BIL (IIJA) Benefits



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Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Already Advancing Critical Projects

Increased infrastructure investment provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—in combination with annual appropriations approved by Congress—is already resulting in tangible improvements to the U.S. rail network and national rail fleet.

Putting BIL's Intercity Rail Funding to Work

The BIL provides \$66 billion in guaranteed capital funding for rail over the five-year life of the bill, with another \$35.8 billion authorized for capital programs and operating funds (and subject to annual Congressional appropriations).

Modernizing Amtrak's Fleet: BIL funding enables Amtrak to begin replacing its 20th century fleet on long-distance, State supported, and NEC services. Amtrak continues to roll out new state-owned Siemens Venture trainsets, refreshing current long-distance equipment, and is advancing the procurement of the next-generation long-distance trainsets.

Siemens Manufacturing Facility – North Carolina: Siemens announced in March 2023 that it is building a \$220 million advanced manufacturing and rail services facility in Lexington, NC in response to increased U.S. rail investment. The facility will begin production in 2024, create more than 500 new jobs by 2028, and grow the state's economy by \$1.6 billion over 12 years.

ADA Stations: With more than \$1 billion of ADA station accessibility projects in the pipeline, Amtrak is set to complete over 100 ADA station projects in FY23 and FY24.

Hudson River Tunnel Project – New York + New Jersey: The Gateway Development Commission is funding design and construction activities for new intercity and transit rail tunnels between New York and New Jersey, adding redundancy to the current 112-year-old tunnels. This project will create 72,000 jobs while improving reliability for the entire region.

Gulf Coast Rail Restoration – Louisiana + Mississippi + Alabama: In December 2022, Amtrak, CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern and the Port of Mobile struck an agreement to allow the restoration of passenger rail service along the Gulf Coast Corridor, knocked offline by Hurricane Katrina. The Southern Rail Commission hopes to launch service by the end of 2023 and will rely on federal grants for construction work.

B&P Tunnel Project – Maryland: Amtrak announced in March 2023 that they have launched early construction activities on the B&P Tunnel Replacement Program. This project will replace a 1.4 mile, 150-year-old tunnel, eliminating a critical NEC chokepoint.

Proposed FY2024 Transit Capital Investment Grants

The U.S. Department of Transportation has issued recommended funding levels for 18 large transit projects across 11 states, using a mix of BIL and Congressionally appropriated funds, including:

- **California:** Los Angeles Westside Subway Section 2 and Section 3 rail projects to better connect downtown Los Angeles with the Westside. (\$643 million)
- **New York/New Jersey:** Hudson Tunnel Project. (\$700 million)
- **Utah:** Utah DOT's FrontRunner Strategic Double Track project to upgrade sections of the current system and purchase 10 new train sets. (\$317 million)

Corridor Identification Program

As part of the Corridor ID Program, the Federal Railroad Administration is currently building a project pipeline inventory based upon applications submitted by States and other eligible. On May 13, 2023, the FRA will deliver this project pipeline to Congress, selecting passenger rail corridors for development, identifying an inventory of capital projects, and establishing a schedule for prioritizing projects based on the availability of funds.



FRA Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study

The FRA is also conducting a study to evaluate the restoration of daily long-distance intercity rail passenger service and the potential for new Amtrak long-distance routes. The FRA's final report will be delivered to Congress in November 2023, providing a long-term blueprint for developing interstate passenger rail service, identifying necessary capital projects and funding sources.



For more information, please visit RailPassengers.org/Leg.Resources



Passenger Bill of Rights

1. Right to Access

- Rights of Passengers with Disability and Reduced Mobility
- Coach Passengers:

2. Right to Information

- Right to Essential Information
- On-Board Information
- Delays and Cancellations
- Notifications to Passengers of Their Rights
- Accuracy in Pricing:

3. Right to Essential On-Board Services

- Restroom Facilities
- Food & Beverage

4. Right to Quality, On-Time Service

- Amtrak Right of Civil Action
- Regulatory Oversight of Preferential Dispatching
- Compensation
- Right of Redress



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Preparing for Congressional Meetings

Rail Passengers Week on the Hill



Day on the Hill Prep

- **Organize Within Your Region:** identify pre-existing interactions with this office, share political intelligence, and identify local projects and issues that you would like addressed during the meeting.
- **Study Up On Corridors and Projects:** Establish yourself as a trusted resource for accurate and timely local information.
- **Look Up Committee Assignments:** determine the transportation responsibilities for your Member of Congress.



Day on the Hill Prep

- **Deliver Materials to Staffers Ahead of Time:** everything you need to send to offices is located at RailPassengers.org/Leg.Resources.
- **Designate a Meeting Leader:** this person will dictate the tempo of the meeting, open the call with our organization's mission statement, and hand off the baton to other members of the meeting.
- **Script Out Your Talking Points:** with so little of the Hill staffer's time and attention, we need to ensure we're staying on topic during these meetings.
- **BUT...** take the 'yes.'



Day on the Hill Prep

- **Also take the 'no'!** We only need 2/3rds in the Senate. House operates on a simple majority.
- **Make Time to Ask Questions:** these offices will have valuable intelligence for our efforts.
- **Say 'Thank You':** a little appreciation can go a long way in cementing your relationship with an office.
- **Ask for Help:** remember that Joe, Madi, and I are here to help you out with any problems. Don't hesitate to reach out with questions or comments.



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Thank you!

Questions?

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