

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 31, 2018

Mr. Richard H. Anderson, President and CEO
National Passenger Rail Corporation
1 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Anderson:

We write to express our deep concern that Amtrak is considering withholding its contribution to the Department of Transportation's (DOT) award under the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) to Colfax County, New Mexico, and the detrimental impact such a decision will have on operation of the Southwest Chief passenger train and long-distance passenger service. We condemn such a decision and urge you to uphold your commitment to the TIGER IX grant and the states and local communities we represent and that you partnered with in this multi-year effort.

DOT awarded New Mexico's Colfax County a \$16 million grant under the TIGER program for the Southwest Chief Route Advancement and Improvement Project to continue essential upgrades to the Southwest Chief line. The grant will fund critical repair work in New Mexico, Kansas, and Colorado and builds on previous awards made under TIGER VI and TIGER VII, including millions more in public and private matching funds.

The Southwest Chief is vital to the economic well-being of our communities. In many cases, the line is the only affordable alternative transportation option to the highways for our citizens, and is an important link to public and private services in larger cities along the route for rural residents, including the elderly and disabled. Every summer, the Southwest Chief also transports thousands of Boy Scouts from across the country to Philmont Scout Ranch near Cimarron, N.M., generating economic activity for businesses in these rural areas along the way.

Amtrak's October 13, 2017, letter to the Colfax County Commission in support of the TIGER IX application conditioned its participation in the grant on the creation of a comprehensive plan and financial commitments to complete the remainder of infrastructure and maintenance costs in New Mexico. Incidentally, Amtrak never discussed this condition with any of the other TIGER IX partners prior to submitting that language as part of the TIGER IX application. This April, Amtrak's government affairs director shared information from the "long distance team" about the performance of the Southwest Chief and again demanded commitments from the states and BNSF Railway to address future capital improvements of \$50 million and annual maintenance costs of \$3 million on track in New Mexico. None of this information was shared with Amtrak's key state and local partners. This includes the statutorily-established Southwest Chief & Front Range Passenger Rail Commission in Colorado

upon which Amtrak is represented. Amtrak cited declining ridership and declining on-time performance statistics without acknowledging your culpability in causing these declines.

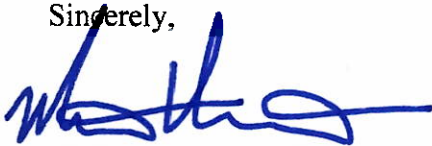
The lack of transparency by Amtrak management about its changing position on the Southwest Chief is troubling, particularly for a Government-Sponsored Enterprise entrusted with an important public transportation mission. We request Amtrak take the lead in developing cooperative plans to ensure the Southwest Chief's successful operation, including seeking funding from the various federal grant programs established to address these specific issues. These programs were well-funded in the Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations bill as was Amtrak itself. It is essential these available funds be applied across the system to address national priorities such as maintaining the Southwest Chief on its current route.

Altering Amtrak's commitment to TIGER IX and withdrawing from this extraordinarily successful partnership is contrary to our Nation's commitment to long-distance passenger service. As such, we strongly urge you to stand behind your commitment to TIGER IX, and fulfill Amtrak's financial commitment towards the project. Amtrak's threat to discontinue service of the Southwest Chief after December 31, 2018 is especially shocking considering that public and private partners have worked collaboratively over the past four years to secure \$71 million worth of track upgrades through our states. The BNSF Railway alone committed to almost \$100 million towards maintenance based on your promises. Your unilateral policy reversal, after years of collaboration, is incredibly fiscally irresponsible.

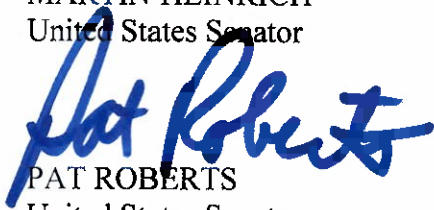
Given the impact of a decision to withhold Amtrak's contribution and the detrimental consequences this will have on our states, we request a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss these issues and to determine a path forward that ensures continued successful operation of the Southwest Chief.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator



PAT ROBERTS
United States Senator



JERRY MORAN
United States Senator



TOM UDALL
United States Senator



MICHAEL F. BENNET
United States Senator



CORY GARDNER
United States Senator



STEVAN PEARCE
United States Representative



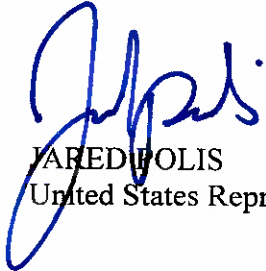
BEN RAY LUJÁN
United States Representative



MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
United States Representative



LYNN JENKINS
United States Representative



JARED POLIS
United States Representative

CC:

BNSF Railway

Colfax County, New Mexico

Colorado Department of Transportation

Colorado Communities of Lamar, La Junta, Trinidad

Colorado Counties of Bent, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo, Huerfano

New Mexico Department of Transportation