



May 3, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

We are grateful for the significant supplemental assistance that Congress has provided to Amtrak and public transit agencies to maintain their operations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide unemployment insurance parity for railroad workers. As you know, investments in transportation – particularly rail and public transit projects – can play an integral role in our nation's effort to recover economically, combat the impacts of climate change, and provide mobility to traditionally underserved populations. As such, as you consider your fiscal year (FY) 2022 appropriations priorities, we urge you to support a robust 302(b) allocation to the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Subcommittee.

To spur a rail revolution and tackle these challenges, the President's FY 2022 Discretionary Budget request contains important increases above FY 2021 funding levels for transportation programs. Some of the key rail and public transit programs in the request include: \$625 million for a new passenger rail competitive grant program, \$375 million for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement grants, \$2.5 billion for the transit Capital Investment Grant program, and \$1 billion for National Infrastructure Investment grants (i.e., RAISE grants). To meet these requested funding increases and maintain or increase the funding levels of other important transportation programs, we urge the Committee to provide a significant increase in the section 302(b) allocation to the THUD Subcommittee. Additionally, Amtrak has identified \$3.9 billion in needs for FY 2022, including funding to address the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on Amtrak and its state/commuter partners.

Furthermore, community projects can be a useful tool to advance essential state and local priorities. We urge the committee to ensure that the overall allocation for the THUD Subcommittee includes additional support for these projects that will supplement the other important undertakings in existing programs. Unlike other modes of transportation, passenger rail does not receive funding through a dedicated account and must rely solely on annual appropriations. We thank you for your ongoing efforts to support programs, such as CRISI, Federal-State Partnership, Amtrak, and National Infrastructure Investment grants, as well as recent plus-ups for highway-rail grade crossings. We encourage you to provide a sufficient allocation to grow these critical programs.

### Benefits of Rail Investment

The record is clear that rail transportation is safe, productive, efficient, and environmentally sustainable and promotes energy independence, reduces congestion on our highways, and contributes positively to public health and well-being.

Transportation plays a key role in supporting a healthy economy through the efficient movement of goods and people. Investment in rail infrastructure, both private and public, also supports over 125,000 private sector rail supply and service jobs across all 50 states and paying an average wage 40 percent higher than the national average. Rail also helps support and bolster domestic manufacturing. Additionally, a smooth logistics system with intermodal connectivity and without major choke points strengthens our exporters' ability to compete in the global economy.

The nation's privately owned Class I freight railroads are investing billions of dollars in their own infrastructure and equipment—averaging about \$25 billion per year and nearly \$740 billion total since 1980. While this private-sector investment will continue on the freight rail network, public investments in transportation infrastructure, particularly for passenger rail, rail transit, and short line freight railroads are critical to spur economic growth and encourage new business development, adding new jobs and expanding employment opportunities nationwide. Intercity, commuter, and transit passenger rail systems move people more than 100 million passenger-miles every weekday in urban, suburban, and rural America—public investment is essential to maintain reliability and grow these services.

Further, while the transportation sector is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, rail is a particularly green mode of transportation accounting for only 2.1 percent of the sector's emissions. An important way to address emissions in the transportation sector is to shift additional freight and passengers to rail. Investments in rail infrastructure through multimodal and rail grant programs can help induce this needed shift to rail. It is also important to note that some policies, such as changes to truck size and weight limitations, can have the opposite effect, and we encourage you to continue to reject those policy riders.

We recognize that there are no easy choices to be made in the budget and appropriations process, but we encourage you to help bolster the economy, support good-paying jobs, and address transportation's impact on climate change through support for rail and public transit programs. The OneRail Coalition looks forward to working with the bipartisan leadership of the House and Senate to invest effectively in domestic transportation infrastructure to support a growing economy and urges the Appropriations Committees to take a leadership role on this national priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Canby".

Anne Canby  
Director, OneRail Coalition

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell