OneRail
America's future is riding on it.

August 31, 2022

Chairman Patrick Leahy
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Vice Chairman Richard Shelby
Senate Appropriations Committee
United State Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Chair Brian Schatz
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and
Urban Development, and Relation Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Susan Collins
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chair Schatz, and Ranking Member Collins:

I write to you on behalf of the OneRail Coalition, a diverse group of rail stakeholders, including freight rail, commuter rail, intercity passenger rail, rail labor, and rail suppliers, who have come together to educate America about the benefits of strong freight and passenger rail systems. As Congress continues work on a Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Appropriations package, we ask for your continued strong support in rail, transit, and multi-modal programs.

Through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58), Congress made a down-payment on the historic investments needed to address the significant backlog of passenger rail infrastructure and equipment needs, alleviate port congestion to improve the functioning of supply chains, assist the rail industry in its decarbonization efforts, address our nation's transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, and improve safety. It is essential, however, that Congress continue to work to ensure that additional funding for rail is supported through the appropriations process and that funding isn't shifted away from transportation investments for other programs.

Based on the levels included in the House and the Senate bills, OneRail recommends at least the following levels in the FY 2023 THUD bill:

Program	OneRail Supports These Levels
Amtrak- Northeast Corridor	$1.135 billion
Amtrak- National Network	$1.466 billion
Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI)	$630 million
Railroad Research and Development	$47 million, including the $5 million set aside for locomotive alternative fuels research
Railroad Safety and Operations	$254.5 million

Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail	$555 million
Fixed Guideway Capital Improvement Grants	$3.012 billion
National Infrastructure Investment Grants	$1.090 billion
Port Infrastructure Development	$300 million

Additionally, we ask that you advocate for increased funding for grade crossing safety efforts, including meeting or exceeding President Biden's budget request. Federal Railroad Administration data shows that highway-rail grade crossing collisions and pedestrians trespassing on tracks together account for over 95% of all railroad fatalities. Further investments to improve safety at highway-rail grade crossings can help to prevent tragic incidents, such as the four fatalities that resulted from a recent Amtrak train derailment in Missouri after striking a dump truck at a grade crossing.

Finally, any changes to increase federal truck weight or length limitations would exacerbate deterioration of crumbling roadway infrastructure, especially bridges, divert cargo from freight rail to truck, and ultimately increase congestion on our nation's highways and transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. We ask that you reject any efforts to increase truck size or weight caps.

Freight and passenger rail are crucial components of an efficient transportation network, allowing people and goods to move quickly and safely to their destinations, while enhancing productivity and economic competitiveness, reducing transportation-related fatalities, supporting good domestic jobs, both directly and indirectly, reducing dangerous emissions, and relieving highway and air congestion. OneRail thanks you for your important work in advancing a FY 2023 Appropriations package.

Sincerely,

Devon Barnhart
Director, OneRail Coalition

cc:
The Honorable Chuck Schumer
The Honorable Mitch McConnell