

**CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515**

June 25, 2003

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Room H-218

The Honorable David R. Obey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Room H-218

The Honorable Ernest J. Istook, Jr.
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Transportation,
Treasury and Independent Agencies
Room 2358 Rayburn HOB

The Honorable John W. Olver
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Transportation,
Treasury and Independent Agencies
Room 1016 Longworth HOB

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As you work toward the funding needs for the nation's transportation systems, we respectfully request that you fund Amtrak at \$1.812 billion -- the level requested by its President and CEO, David Gunn.

Fully funding Amtrak's grant request will allow Mr. Gunn to bring stability to Amtrak's operations. Policymakers will then be able to debate the railroad's future in something other than a crisis environment. In the year that he has been at the helm of Amtrak, David Gunn has completely reorganized the railroad, created efficiencies by streamlining the workforce, and worked closely with the states to increase their share to 100 percent of the operating loss for services Amtrak operates at the states' request. He has also begun the tasks of repairing wrecked and damaged cars, improving on-time performance, and upgrading the quality of service to Amtrak's customers. At the same time, he has taken steps to eliminate unprofitable lines of business and to refocus the company on its core mission -- moving passengers.

The DOT Inspector General and others have made it clear that Amtrak requires a substantial Federal investment to rehabilitate its infrastructure. In attempting to meet the self-sufficiency mandate that Congress enacted in the Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act of 1997, Amtrak had no choice but to postpone critical infrastructure replacement and maintenance activities. The result is a railroad in poor financial and physical shape. The problem can be fixed -- and must be fixed -- but it will take time and money. We believe that David Gunn has demonstrated to this Congress that he has the knowledge, discipline, and integrity to make the reforms required to right the previous wrongs at Amtrak. His track record speaks for itself.

Mr. Gunn has opened Amtrak's books and they are available to anyone who wishes to see them. The numbers make it clear that Amtrak is teetering on the brink of the precipice and needs to be stabilized. The \$1.812 billion that Amtrak has requested for FY 2004 is critical to bringing about that stability. As you work to reach agreement on the appropriate funding for the respective modes, we urge you to approve \$1.812 billion for Amtrak.

Sincerely,

<u>Jack Quinn</u>	<u>Jim Oberstar</u>
<u>Corine Brown</u>	<u>Mike Costle</u>
<u>Robert Byrd</u>	<u>Jim Langerin</u>
<u>Earl Blumenauer</u>	<u>Tina Fey</u>
<u>Robert J. Matsui</u>	<u>Neil Abernethy</u>
<u>Richard E. Neal</u>	<u>Raul M. Grijalva</u>
<u>John W. McHugh</u>	<u>John P. Tierney</u>
<u>Walter B. Jones</u>	<u>Bobby J. Bricker</u>