

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 23, 2020

William Flynn
President and Chief Executive Officer, Amtrak
60 Massachusetts Ave NE
Washington, DC 20002

Mr. Flynn:

We are reaching out today regarding Amtrak's recent Congressional budget request for Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21). Despite record investment in Amtrak, this proposal guts long-distance service and leaves 3,700 Americans looking for work. We are very troubled by this proposal, and ask that you provide additional information as well as a commitment to return to full service when the pandemic draws to a close.

Passenger rail service is a critical component of the U.S. transportation network, providing an efficient means of connecting cities and towns across the country. Long-distance service allows us to bring tourists, businesses, and families to communities like Havre, Elko, and Prince, providing gateways to our states. That's why we have all been supportive of Congress providing consistent funding for Amtrak in annual appropriations bills. As COVID-19 swept the nation and ridership dropped steeply, Congress furthered its investment in Amtrak by providing \$1.02 billion in the CARES Act.

Yet, when Amtrak requested \$1.5 billion in supplemental FY21 funding to offset COVID-19 losses, the request included a proposal to temporarily slash staffing and service across the board. Rural networks could see trains running three days a week instead of seven, and 20 percent of Amtrak employees could lose their jobs. Putting the brunt of budget shortfalls on rural America and its workers is unacceptable, no matter the circumstances, but it's particularly egregious when Amtrak's long-distance provided double the revenue of state-supported routes or the Northeast Corridor combined in May. If Congress is going to continue funding Amtrak at historic levels, you need to work to ensure this path forward works for places such as Montana, Nevada, and West Virginia alike. For Congress to continue its support for all operations, we need a commitment from Amtrak on what the conditions and timelines of a full resumption of 7-day-a-week service on all long-distance routes would look like, and the costs associated with the reduction and resumption of service.

We appreciate your time and attention to this critical issue. We all share an interest in maintaining reliable long-distance Amtrak service, so we look forward to working with you to protecting this network and the employees who make it possible.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez-Masto
United States Senator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator