

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510
December 20, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
United States Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

We are pleased to support the National Railroad Passenger Corporation's (Amtrak) application for FY 2019 Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Program grant funding for the *Northeast Corridor (NEC) Track A Winans to Bridge Improvement Project*. The proposed improvements will achieve a state of good repair on a segment of the NEC, improve efficiency, save passenger travel time, improve ride comfort, and encourage economic development.

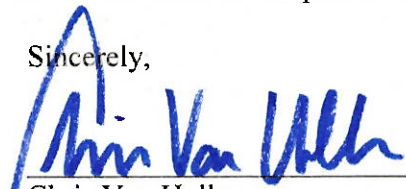
The NEC serves more than 50 million people who live in the Northeast U.S., and is the economic spine of the region. The NEC carries more than 750,000 passengers on 2,200 daily commuter and intercity trains, with additional freight use as well. Already the nation's busiest rail corridor, the NEC's ridership levels are projected to double by 2040.

Unfortunately, the segment of the NEC where the proposed project is located presents a bottleneck and interrupts smooth transit. It contributes to service disruptions on the NEC that cost the economy \$500 million per year in lost productivity. The resulting congestion constrains the ability of Amtrak intercity passenger and MARC commuter rail trains to respond to increasing demands for service.


The proposed project will replace and upgrade five miles of NEC mainline track from Class 3 to Class 5 to support higher speeds, improved ride quality, and rail traffic mitigation during track outages. It will modernize a portion of the NEC in preparation for new Amtrak Acela 2021 high speed rail service and replacement of the Civil War-era Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel. It will also sustain the regional economy by bringing NEC infrastructure in Maryland to a state of good repair and providing travel time savings for MARC and Amtrak trains.

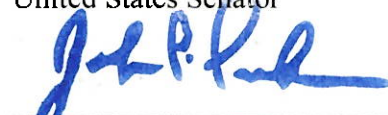
Through the *NEC Track A from Winans to Bridge Improvement Project*, the NEC can maintain its role as the rail transportation and economic spine of the Northeast region. We urge you to consider Amtrak's efforts to improve efficiency and economic vitality along the NEC.

Sincerely,


Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator


C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
Member of Congress


Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator


John Sarbanes
Member of Congress