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United States Senate

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June 8, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer,

Recently, Amtrak submitted a supplemental FY21 funding request to House and Senate Leadership for an additional \$1.475 billion over their initial FY21 budget request of \$2.04 billion.

As a supporter of Amtrak, I am writing to request that you include these additional funds in the next COVID-19 response bill or in an upcoming appropriations measure as emergency spending. The funds provided to Amtrak in the CARES Act were enough to cover Amtrak's expenses through the end of this fiscal year; however, their FY21 budget request submitted to Congress in February was based on a typical year projection and did not include a request for funds to address COVID-19 impacts. FY21 will not be a typical year for any mode of transit. Amtrak's footprint in Maryland is significant. Given that Amtrak spent over \$61 million on goods and services in Maryland during FY17 (the last year figures are available), over 2,200 Maryland residents are employed by Amtrak and over 2 million boardings and alightings occurred at Maryland's six stations during the last fiscal year, I am especially concerned about the challenges ahead in the upcoming fiscal year.

Amtrak advises me that at this time next year – 7 months into the next fiscal year – ridership is projected to only be at 50% of their initial estimate for FY21. Without these supplemental funds, Amtrak will be forced to make even further drastic cuts to the workforce, service and capital projects, including state or good repair, Baltimore Penn Station and the B&P Tunnel Replacement Project. At a time when the Federal government should be doing everything it can to keep people employed in response to this crisis, any further reduction to workforce would be detrimental to our nation's economy.

I look forward to working with you to support this critical funding. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

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