



Rail Passengers Association

Fiscal Year 2025 Legislative Grant Request

Passenger rail programs created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) are already beginning to reshape America’s rail network, with the U.S. Department of Transportation awarding nearly \$30 billion in rail grants, in addition to 69 planning and development grants for passenger rail corridors across 44 states.

Rail Passengers remains committed to working with Congress to ensure there is meaningful oversight on these newly expanded passenger rail programs and on Amtrak operations. There have been challenges in efficiently ramping up capital investment programs—for the Federal Railroad Administration, for Amtrak, and for States. We believe strong Congressional oversight can help ensure that these rail projects move as quickly as the law allows through the planning, review, and design phase.

IIJA funding can only be used for certain purposes and cannot replace Amtrak's annual appropriations. Providing sufficient FY25 funding is necessary to allow Amtrak to operate trains (find out more about ridership trends at RailPassengers.org/Ridership); perform annual maintenance and carry out core functions to avoid long-term deterioration of assets and services; and make targeted, high-priority investments for future expansion. ***Rail Passengers* is asking Congress to fully fund rail programs at the authorized levels established by the IIJA.**

	FY24 Enacted	FY24 IIJA Authorized
Amtrak	\$2,427 ML	\$4,000 ML
<i>Northeast Corridor</i>	\$1,141 ML	\$1,300 ML
<i>National Network</i>	\$1,286 ML	\$2,700 ML
Federal Railroad Administration	\$268 ML	\$263 ML
Federal-State Partnership for ICPR	\$75 ML	\$1,500 ML
CRISI Grants	\$199 ML	\$1,000 ML
Railroad Crossing Elimination Grants	\$0	\$500 ML
Restoration & Enhancement Grants	\$0	\$50 ML

Improve Amtrak Transparency and Oversight

Rail Passengers supports legislative initiatives which will improve Amtrak responsiveness to passengers and increase transparency for taxpayers:

- Require Amtrak’s Board of Directors to comply with standard open meeting requirements;
- Expand Amtrak’s Board of Directors annual meeting requirements to include meetings with representatives of state-supported services;

- Require Amtrak’s Board of Directors to publicly disclose any bonus payment made to an Amtrak officer in a year during which Amtrak receives federal grants;
- Require Amtrak to disclose certain vendor agreements utilized to provide intercity rail service to state-sponsors or the State-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee (SAIPRC) upon request.

Address Amtrak Board of Directors Vacancies: There are currently four expired seats and one vacancy on Amtrak’s Board of Directors. We stand ready to work with Congress and the White House to advance a slate of Directors that—as required by Congress in the IIJA—provides balanced regional representation, speaking for both rural and urban passengers.

Holding Freight Railroads Accountable

Railway Safety Act: *Rail Passengers* supports the bipartisan push to Railway Safety Act improve freight rail safety by capping train lengths for certain cargo, mandating two-person crews, increasing financial penalties for violations, and improving oversight and reporting.

On-Time Performance and Fairness for Passengers: Amtrak passengers have long been a “canary in the coal mine” for U.S. rail operations, with increasing freight-caused delays to Amtrak trains serving as a leading indicator of the decline in reliability and fluidity on our nation’s rail network.

- **Freight train interference remains the number one source of Amtrak delays**, with freight railroads causing almost 1,000,000 minutes of delay to passengers in FY2023—equal to almost two years’ worth of passengers stuck waiting to move again!
- In 2023, **15 of the 15 Amtrak long-distance routes operating over freight rail tracks did not meet the minimum threshold of acceptable service** established by the Federal Railroad Administration Metrics & Standards ($\geq 80\%$ Customer On-Time Performance).
- **State corridor trains are impacted too.** For instance, more than a third of passengers on the *Cascades*, operating between Seattle and Eugene, arrived late in 2023 due primarily to Host Railroad delays.
- **These delays have real costs.** Amtrak’s Inspector General estimated that if Amtrak trains were able to operate reliably without freight train interference, Amtrak could realize annual savings of \$41.9 million, and one-time savings of \$336 million by reducing equipment replacement needs. This money—provided by America’s passengers and taxpayers—could be invested in providing better service across the country.

How Can We Improve On-Time Performance? *Rail Passengers* is asking Members of Congress to apply pressure to Host Railroads, who *must* fulfill their legal obligation to give priority dispatching to Amtrak trains.

American High-Speed Rail Act

As Congress prepares for the next Surface Transportation Reauthorization, we’re endorsing legislation that would provide up to \$41 billion annually over 5 years for high-speed and higher-speed rail corridor planning and construction. This bill would also incentivize private investment by making grants available to public-private partnerships and provide funding for “credit risk premiums” to unlock the RRIF loan program.

For more information, please visit RailPassengers.org/Leg.Resources