

**The U.S. Conference of Mayors  
Council of State Governments  
International City/County Management Association  
National Conference of State Legislatures  
National League of Cities**

January 30, 2003

The Honorable Ted Stevens  
Chairman  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
S-128 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
S-128 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby  
Chairman  
Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee  
U. S. Senate  
133 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee  
U. S. Senate  
133 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Stevens, Byrd, Shelby, and Murray:

As you begin conference negotiations on the FY03 Omnibus Appropriations bill, we urge you to fund Amtrak at the \$1.2 billion appropriations level for fiscal year 2003. Without this level of funding, Amtrak service will be severely impacted, resulting in the loss of service to many communities we all represent.

Last week, CNN and Gallup conducted a public opinion poll which illustrated overwhelming support for Amtrak. According to this poll, over 85 percent of participants support providing Amtrak with \$2 billion annually to fund its operations. Based on this and other polls conducted in the summer of 2002, it is apparent that Americans value the services provided by Amtrak and understand the importance of maintaining a viable cross-country rail system.

As a viable national passenger rail system, Amtrak annually provides long-distance travel to over 23 million Americans residing in 46 states. Moreover, Amtrak trains carry 60 million commuters to and from work in congested metropolitan areas each year. Among the cities most dependent upon Amtrak, and the services it provides, are New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Seattle. According to recent statistics over 300,000 Americans in the New York Metropolitan area depend on Amtrak for daily train service. In Chicago, over 10,000 Americans depend on Amtrak for daily train service to other regional cities such as Milwaukee and Detroit. Amtrak not only provides critical services to major metropolitan areas, it provides vital, sometimes life-saving service to Americans by serving as a source of transportation to communities that must be evacuated due to severe weather related conditions. In addition, rail served a vital need during the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> when

aviation was completely shut down. It is this transportation diversity that Amtrak provides that should not be sacrificed in such uncertain times.

As elected officials representing states and localities that are facing historic economic shortfalls, a loss of Amtrak rail service would further hobble our struggling economies. In light of the valuable services Amtrak provides to states and communities across the country, it is our hope that you will appreciate the importance of a fully funded Amtrak and that it be reflected in your ultimate funding decision. To put it simply, enactment of the House Committee mark of \$762 million would guarantee insolvency and a complete shutdown of the railroad by spring

The nation's state and local leaders believe the federal government must continue to invest in passenger rail service, including long distance service, as a viable transportation alternative. Therefore, we urge you to provide the \$1.2 billion in funding for Amtrak to ensure that we maintain a national passenger rail system.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. As always, the nation's state and local leaders welcomes the opportunity to work with you and your staff during the conference committee process.

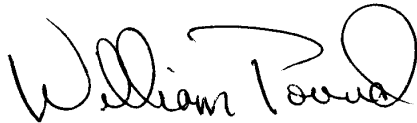
Sincerely,



J. Thomas Cochran  
Executive Director  
The United States Conference of Mayors



Daniel M. Sprague  
Executive Director  
Council of State Governments



William Pound  
Executive Director  
National Conference of State Legislatures



Donald J. Borut  
Executive Director  
National League of Cities

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert O'Neill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "O".

Robert O'Neill  
Executive Director  
International City/County Management  
Association