



AmeriStarRail

Transportation Innovation

December 16, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing this open letter to you because of the need to share with you and others the concerns of many working class citizens that you fight so hard for on many issues. Amtrak is planning to deny them Coach accommodations on Amtrak's fastest trains, the Alstom Avelia Liberty trainsets, when service begins in the Fall of 2023 on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor at speeds up to 160 MPH. When I attended your announcement of Amtrak's selection of these new trains at the Wilmington train station on August 26, 2016, I too shared your enthusiasm that a new era for high-speed rail in America would ride on these new Amtrak trains.

Over the years that we occasionally travelled together on Amtrak between Wilmington and Washington during your time in the US Senate, I enjoyed our discussions about the importance of high-speed rail for America's future. I know that our mutual support for more high-speed rail did not envision it only being for those affluent enough to afford Business and First Class fares while leaving Coach passengers behind.

That's why you will be interested to know that my Wilmington based company, AmeriStarRail (ASR), envisions making Amtrak's new high-speed trains more inclusive for all passengers.

This past National Transit Equity Day, February 4, 2022, AmeriStarRail sent a letter to Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner to begin a direct dialogue to help Amtrak improve Transportation Equity on the Northeast Corridor by providing Coach accommodations for seniors, students, families, people with disabilities and low-income coach passengers on Amtrak's publicly supported high-speed trains. Unfortunately Mr. Gardner, while accepting a taxpayer funded bonus of more than a quarter-of-a-million dollars, has refused to meet with us and various stakeholders such as several branches of the NAACP from Boston to Washington, including the Wilmington branch.

Denying affordable and equitable access for Coach passengers to Amtrak's fastest trains is a discriminatory operating practice because the high-speed tracks for Acela trains, such as the recently completed half-billion dollar New Jersey High Speed Rail Improvement Program, are funded by all taxpayers. Not allowing Coach passengers to ride Amtrak's fastest trains is a poor utilization of the infrastructure funds that you and Congress worked so hard to provide to Amtrak. According to Amtrak's ridership reports, although Amtrak carried 12.5 million passengers on the Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington in 2019, less than 30%, or only 3.6 million passengers could afford to ride on high-speed Acela trains.

AmeriStarRail's Transportation Equity solution of offering Triple-Class service of Coach, Business and First Class on a standardized Northeast Corridor fleet of 160 MPH high-speed trains means 100% of Amtrak passengers and 100% of Amtrak trains will utilize the federal investment in the high-speed rail infrastructure from Boston to Washington.



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As detailed on our website www.AmeriStarRail.com, ASR is proposing a more efficient way to run the Northeast Corridor by operating Amtrak branded trains with union crews as an affiliated carrier, in the same way private airlines operate American Eagle flights for American Airlines. ASR would pay Amtrak hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenue each year for track user fees, station access fees and performance incentives. As a valuable public asset, the Northeast Corridor infrastructure will still be owned, controlled and maintained by Amtrak with continued support by Congress and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

We believe we can profitably expand Amtrak's Northeast Corridor service directly to 30 new stations including Center City Philadelphia, Hoboken, Long Island and Maine. Our Transportation Equity solution reduces Amtrak's dependency on federal subsidies to repay the \$2.4 billion loan for the new Acela trains and provides an innovative way to diversify ticket revenues by including Coach passengers on a standardized fleet of Alstom Avelia Liberty trainsets in a "stretch" version with 12 cars for Coach, Business and First Class.

This solution will also save hundreds of union jobs at Alstom's Hornell, NY plant, building 76 more high-speed trainsets through 2030, with private financing. Amtrak's current \$7.3 billion plan to buy slower trains for Northeast Corridor coach passengers from Siemens would still go forward but these trainsets can be reassigned to Amtrak's new routes nationwide.

All high-speed trains in Europe and Asia serve Coach passengers. All airlines offering First Class and Business Class seating also serve Coach passengers on the same aircraft on every flight. AmeriStarRail wants to implement a privately funded solution that will allow Amtrak to achieve this standard for Transportation Equity. Our goal is for Amtrak conductors to announce "All Aboard" Amtrak's fastest trains for all passengers.

To achieve this goal, we would like to request your assistance for USDOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg, or his designee, to attend a meeting with us, passenger stakeholders, Members of Congress who wish to attend and Amtrak CEO Gardner to address Amtrak's Transportation Equity issues on the Northeast Corridor which AmeriStarRail is seeking to resolve. This meeting will allow more than a dozen stakeholder groups, including several branches of the NAACP between Boston and Washington, to express their concerns about Amtrak excluding Coach accommodations from their fastest trains. Your participation would also be most welcomed by those working hard to ensure America's future high-speed trains equitably serve all of the people.

Sincerely,

Scott R. Spencer
Chief Operating Officer

Cc:

A. Phillip Randolph Institute
Delaware Transportation Equity Coalition
Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers
Delmarva Rail Passengers Association
Disabled American Veterans Organization
Empire State Passengers Association
High Speed Rail Alliance
Labor Network for Sustainability
Members of Congress
NAACP Wilmington, DE Branch (Unit 2031) and other NAACP Branches (Boston - Washington)
National Aging and Disability Transportation Center
National Disability Rights Network
U.S. High Speed Rail Association

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