



AmeriStarRail

Transportation Innovation

February 4, 2022

Mr. Stephen Gardner
President and CEO
National Railroad Passenger Corporation
1 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Gardner,

I am writing to you today, on National Transit Equity Day, because it is important to improve Transportation Equity on Amtrak in honor of the sacrifices that Rosa Parks and others have made to confront and eliminate transportation discrimination.

As you know, since 2015, former Amtrak President Paul Reistrup and I, along with our company, AmeriStarRail (www.AmeriStarRail.com), have made multiple attempts to assist Amtrak in providing Transportation Equity for all Northeast Corridor passengers. A key objective of our plan to improve Amtrak's Northeast Corridor service is to achieve Transportation Equity by providing coach passengers with affordable and equitable access to High-Speed Rail, for the first time in America's history.

Currently, Amtrak's operation of Acela high-speed trains, for business and first class passengers only, relegates coach passengers to slower Regional trains. This operating practice denies affordable and equitable access to high-speed rail service for those who cannot afford Acela fares; this includes seniors, families, students, disabled and low-income coach passengers. Since most coach passengers cannot afford Acela business and first class ticket prices, their access to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor service is restricted to fewer train services at slower speeds than Acela passengers.

This discriminatory operating practice needs to be eliminated, as the high speeds of Acela trains are made possible by the expenditure of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars each year for high-speed rail infrastructure projects. Not allowing coach passengers to ride Acela high-speed trains represents a poor utilization of these public tax dollars and Northeast Corridor track capacity. As documented in Amtrak 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.

As AmeriStarRail proposed to Amtrak in 2019, our solution for Transportation Equity on the Northeast Corridor would save taxpayer dollars by providing over \$5 billion in private financing for a new standardized fleet of 160 MPH trainsets with triple-class seating for passengers in Coach, Business and First Class on every train. This would enable Amtrak to offer high-frequency, high-capacity, high-speed service to all passengers. Seniors, families, students, disabled and low-income passengers would have affordable access in Coach to the benefits of high-speed service, utilizing the infrastructure built and maintained with public tax dollars. Offering coach seating on all high-speed trains is consistent with the airline industry model of coach, business and first class seating on the same aircraft and the inclusion of coach seating on all high-speed trains in Asia and Europe.



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Additional advantages of providing Transportation Equity, with a standardized fleet of high-speed trains, offering triple-class service, are significant operating efficiencies and capacity improvements for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, which AmeriStarRail has detailed in previous proposals to Amtrak.

For example, instead of Regional coach passengers waiting for a Regional train once per hour between New York and Washington, or Acela business and first class passengers waiting once per hour for an Acela train on the same route, all passengers will have a train departure available every 30 minutes. This effectively doubles train service with the same scheduled train frequency and the same amount of train miles without adding trains to the congested Northeast Corridor.

Achieving Transportation Equity on Amtrak with a standardized fleet of 160 MPH high-speed trains will also allow the synchronization of operating speeds of all Northeast Corridor Amtrak trains for the first time in Amtrak's operating history. This will reduce the operating costs and inefficiencies of train overtakes, congestion, delays and dispatching complexities and improve Northeast Corridor capacity.

Providing coach passengers with equitable and affordable access to high-speed rail service in America is consistent with President Biden's goals for the Build Back Better Act which provides Amtrak funding for high-speed rail infrastructure projects.

AmeriStarRail takes seriously our corporate and social responsibilities to identify and offer effective solutions to improve Freedom of Mobility for the passengers we seek to serve. To promptly address the need to achieve Transportation Equity for coach passengers on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, the AmeriStarRail team and other concerned stakeholder groups look forward to meeting with you, at your earliest opportunity, to discuss solutions to optimize Amtrak rail service, use of public tax dollars and to ensure that coach passengers have equitable and affordable access to high-speed rail service in America.

Sincerely,

Scott R. Spencer
Chief Operating Officer

Cc:

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

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