

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 8, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

We write to express our support for the Commonwealth of Virginia's application, submitted jointly with Amtrak, for funding under the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2019 Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Program.

The Commonwealth is leading efforts, not only with Amtrak but also with 16 other states, to procure new railway vehicles to replace its aging stock. The National Surface Transportation Board has recommended that many existing railcars be retired, some of which are over 40 years old. Maintaining and repairing current equipment is costly in terms of both safety and efficiency. New railcars will provide safer, better, and more reliable mobility. This funding, in conjunction with Virginia's numerous high priority passenger rail projects, will help make state-sponsored service a more reliable and pleasant transportation alternative.

Virginia is one of 17 states and regional authorities to fund the state-sponsored Amtrak business lines of service, which account for nearly 50% of total Amtrak ridership nationwide. Currently, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation administers state funding for six daily Amtrak Northeast Regional round trips, originating in Newport News, Norfolk, Richmond, and Roanoke, connecting Virginians to stops along the Northeast Corridor. In federal Fiscal Year 2019, over 924,000 individuals used the service - the highest number in the Commonwealth's history. Pending award of this grant and action by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, Virginia is prepared to commit an additional \$15 million in state funding and \$32.5 million in Amtrak revenues to the project.

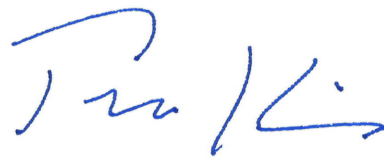
Please give full and fair evaluation to this project, which will benefit the safety and comfort of the travelling public.

Should you or your staff have any questions regarding this project, please contact Stephanie Doherty of Senator Warner's office at (202) 224-2023, or Evan McWalters of Senator Kaine's office at (202) 224-4024.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator