

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 7, 2022

Mr. Bill Flynn, Chief Executive Officer
Mr. Stephen J. Gardner, President
Amtrak
1 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Flynn and Mr. Gardner:

We write today concerning this week's reported incident where approximately 220 passengers and six crew members suffered being stranded more than 24 hours on an Amtrak train in Lynchburg, VA. Amtrak Crescent Train 20 left New Orleans, LA on Sunday January 2, en route to New York. On Monday morning, the train made it 20 miles outside of Lynchburg before it had to turn around and return to Lynchburg's Kemper Street Station due to downed powerlines and trees caused by a winter storm.

According to news reports, passengers on board described the lack of communication from Amtrak as a nightmare situation.¹ One passenger has said that Amtrak did not tell passengers that they would be spending the night in the train after it returned to Kemper Street Station.² While Amtrak released a statement saying that food and water was available for its stranded customers, passengers have reported that the train ran out of food.³

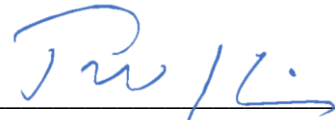
It is unacceptable that Amtrak did not better communicate with passengers during an emergency situation such as this. Inclement weather is uncontrollable. However, Amtrak must have appropriate systems and practices in place to ensure that passengers and crew caught in such weather are not only safe, but also understand the situation and their options. We have long been supporters of Amtrak; but, simply put, Amtrak must do better.

Our staff will follow up to discuss Amtrak's current procedures as well as steps Amtrak is taking so that communication failures like what we saw this week in Lynchburg do not happen again.

Thank you,



Mark R. Warner
U.S. Senator



Tim Kaine
U.S. Senator

¹ <https://wset.com/news/local/day-long-stranded-amtrak-passengers-in-lynchburg-describe-nightmare-travel-situation>

² <https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/atlanta/passengers-say-they-have-been-stuck-amtrak-train-nearly-40-hours/PDVQPAYYGFFY7N6GEA4N66YTOI/>

³ <https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/atlanta/passengers-say-they-have-been-stuck-amtrak-train-nearly-40-hours/PDVQPAYYGFFY7N6GEA4N66YTOI/>