

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 16, 2003

Dear Colleague:

As we consider the needs of the country and funding for the Federal government, we want all of you to consider carefully the critical needs of Amtrak. Unless we restore funding for this program now, Amtrak will go bankrupt this spring.

We intend to offer an amendment to the Appropriations bill to restore the full funding necessary to ensure continued Amtrak operations. The Senate Appropriations Committee last year unanimously agreed to provide \$1.2 billion for FY 2003 for Amtrak. The revised Senate Appropriations bill we are about to consider would provide only \$826 million – a cut of \$374 million. A funding level of \$826 million represents a cut of 27% from the prior year's level – no other transportation program has been singled out for a reduction of this magnitude. We ask you to support, and co-sponsor, the effort to restore full funding.

Amtrak has a new and aggressive Chief Executive Officer, David Gunn, who is reforming the railroad. He has taken practical steps to bring stability to Amtrak; he has opened the company's books and made them available to the U.S. Department of Transportation and each of the oversight Committees in Congress, and he has made tough choices to shrink the Amtrak workforce and eliminate certain services. He has been straightforward with Congress about the critical shortages confronting Amtrak and the fiscal realities that they face. No one disputes that Amtrak is in a precarious financial position. In fact, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Inspector General testified last year that Amtrak's capital needs alone are \$1 billion annually. Mr. Gunn's leadership gives us an opportunity to address Amtrak's long term viability and we must not cut it short now.

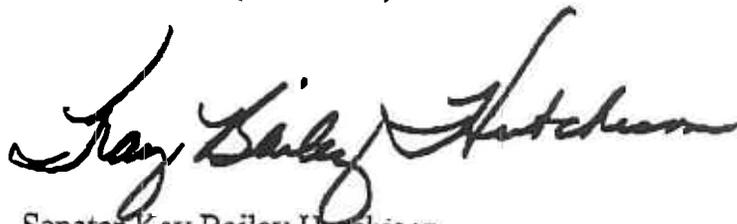
Amtrak will not survive unless we take responsibility for its survival – it is that simple. If we do not support Amtrak, we will seal Amtrak's fate. Amtrak will go bankrupt and shut down this spring, leaving thousands of Amtrak riders unable to travel to destinations around the country and stranding hundreds of thousands of transit riders whose commuter rail systems depend on Amtrak's continued viability.

Amtrak today operates in 46 States and all of our constituents benefit from its services. We urge you to support full funding for Amtrak. If you would like to co-

sponsor the amendment, please contact Peter Rogoff at 224-7245 (Byrd/Murray), , Debbie Hersman at 224-9000 (Hollings), or Joe Mondello at 224-9775 (Hutchison).



Senator Patty Murray



Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison



Senator Robert C. Byrd



Senator Olympia J. Snowe



Senator Fritz Hollings



Senator Lincoln D. Chafee

