



November 21, 2014

Secretary Barry Schoch, P.E.  
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation  
400 North Street, 6th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Passenger Rail Service for Western Pennsylvania

Dear Secretary Schoch,

Green Building Alliance (GBA) wishes to convey our strong support for increased service on AMTRAK's Pennsylvanian service between Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and points east. Passenger rail service is one of the most environmentally friendly modes of transport and provides clear economic and social benefits for the Commonwealth.

GBA is a community benefit organization dedicated to the creation of healthy, high-performing places for everyone in Western Pennsylvania by providing leadership that connects knowledge, transformative ideas, and collaborative action. Headquartered in Pittsburgh, Green Building Alliance was founded in 1993 and is a chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council. GBA also manages the *Pittsburgh 2030 District* which seeks an immediate 10% reduction in transportation emissions, with incremental targets reaching a 50% reduction by 2030.

Improved rail service between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg offers tremendous triple-bottom line benefits to our region and state. In addition to improved mobility and strong economic paybacks, there are clear and critical environmental benefits as well. As noted in *On Track to Accessibility, Increasing Service of the Pennsylvanian: Benefits and Costs*, increased passenger rail service has the potential to eliminate nearly 73,000 automobile trips and over 16,000,000 vehicle-miles from Pennsylvania roadways. Shifting trans-state passengers from automobile to passenger rail directly reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, criteria air pollutants, and non-source point pollution. A focus on improved air quality is critically important given the number of Pennsylvanians currently living in nonattainment areas (areas having air quality worse than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards as defined in the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970).

The current transportation connectivity situation across the Commonwealth leaves no alternative for most residents but to drive between our economic centers. This puts us behind national trends towards strong alternative transportation, negatively impacts our ability to attract and retain a talented workforce and hurts our region economically. Increasing service from one to three trains a day between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg will significantly advance connectivity for our region helping to keep us competitive with our peer cities. We urge you to take the first step and request additional service from Amtrak for the Pennsylvanian.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean C. Luther".

Sean C. Luther, LEED AP  
Senior Director

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