



307 Fourth Avenue, Suite 1500 · Pittsburgh, PA 15222

January 12, 2015

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

RE: Expansion of Amtrak rail service for PA prosperity

Dear Secretary Schoch,

On behalf of Sustainable Pittsburgh, I am writing to urge PennDOT's support for increasing Amtrak's passenger rail service on the Pennsylvanian. The Pennsylvanian train line represents critical infrastructure. Increased service for Western Pennsylvania will bring material benefits serving the social, economic, and environmental needs here and for the Commonwealth as a whole.

With a mission to accelerate the policy and practice of sustainability for southwestern Pennsylvania, Sustainable Pittsburgh prioritizes public investments that advance sustainable development. Public transportation, and particularly cross-state passenger rail is a prime example of services that promote this imperative.

By increasing frequency of Amtrak service to and from Pittsburgh, the Commonwealth will measurably achieve benefits to the environment, economy, and provide access to opportunity for many more residents and visitors.

As well documented in the benefits analysis report, *On Track to Accessibility, Increasing Service of the Pennsylvanian: Benefits and Costs*, travelers utilizing the train instead of their car will create savings for the State through reduced emissions, accidents, and highway and bridge maintenance costs. Additionally, individual households could save money which could support other sectors of the economy.

Current trends of increasing ridership on the Pennsylvanian, despite limited service, adds to the rationale for service expansion. Especially during these times of falling gasoline prices, now is the time to invest in alternative transportation modes in order to enhance infrastructure that is efficient, equitable, and meets the needs of our communities across the state that depend on intercity travel. Highly reliable and efficient at moving people, it's regrettable that the Pennsylvanian ranks lowest in state support compared to other Amtrak lines assessed in *On Track to Accessibility*. Investment in, for example, tripling service of the Pennsylvania is estimated to nearly double revenue and ridership, a compelling case for providing the public transportation access while contributing to the Commonwealth's sustainability.

Please do call upon Amtrak to expand service of the Pennsylvanian.

Sincerely,

Court Gould
Executive Director