



July 29, 2013

The Honorable Tom Latham
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
2358A Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Latham:

On behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and its nearly 1,500 member organizations, I write to express APTA's concerns about certain language in H.R. 2610, the FY 2014 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. Of particular concern is authorizing language that would prohibit the use of funds for individual high-speed rail projects and for specific actions by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) regarding such projects.

APTA believes that the nation needs an integrated network of passenger rail services, including high-speed rail where appropriate, that connects with the existing Amtrak system, and with commuter rail and transit operations. We believe that travelers on a multi-modal, interconnected system should be able to move between major metropolitan regions linked by rail service, and that demand for such service will continue to grow as our population and these regions grow in the future.

While we welcome debate on the details of a federal program to authorize investment in passenger rail service in this country, we believe that individual projects which have been funded with prior year appropriations and have already been initiated with substantial financial commitments by states and regions, require a consistent, dependable federal commitment. Planning and development of major capital transportation investment projects take years, and consistent treatment of those projects at the federal level is essential to the efficient use of federal and state funds.

Additionally, we are concerned that the language would inhibit the STB's ability to independently review and make decisions that affect other projects, most notably jeopardizing electrification of an existing commuter rail line. The language would inhibit STB's process and create the unintended consequence of interfering with this service improvement for the more than 1,000,000 riders who use this service every month.

We thank you for consideration of our views. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Melaniphy
President and CEO

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