

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3011**

January 25, 2019

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

We write to request that you adhere to the deadline for awarding the \$275 million already appropriated by Congress to fund urgent rail projects along the Northeast Corridor (NEC). Our constituents are a significant part of the 780,000 commuter trips and 40,000 intercity trips that the NEC supports every single day. They are disadvantaged by the unacceptable delay in the disbursement of these funds to improve the safety and reliability of our vital rail system. Any delay or any deferred decision by the Department of Transportation (DOT) on NEC infrastructure investment means a hard-working parent not making it home to see his or her family on time.

As you are aware, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) finally issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Program (Partnership Program) in November 2018, with a submission deadline of March 18, 2019. We urge you to work with the FRA Administrator to ensure that FRA and DOT fulfill their obligations, despite the ongoing shutdown and prioritize the timely and full release of these funds as directed by Congress specifically for passenger rail infrastructure.

The FRA Administrator made clear that rail infrastructure owners and operators must plan for the maintenance and replacement of their assets. So too must the FRA be a stable and reliable partner in providing federal funds in accordance with those plans to improve safety and reliability.


Any delay will only make a dire infrastructure situation worse and further jeopardize many vital infrastructure projects along the NEC. The NEC is known to support businesses along its length that together generate 30 percent of all U.S. jobs and contribute \$3 trillion annually to our economy. New transit, trains, and tunnels are exactly the type of infrastructure projects our country needs to build a strong future.

The nearly one million Americans citizens relying on the NEC to get to work and return home safely to their families every day are depending on the NEC to maintain their quality of life, and the federal government to honor its responsibility.

Thank you for your attention to our request. We look forward to your immediate response.

Sincerely,

  
Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress

  
Peter T. King  
Member of Congress

  
Jim Himes  
Member of Congress

  
Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

  
Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

  
David Trone  
Member of Congress

  
Max Rose  
Member of Congress

  
Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

  
David Cicilline  
Member of Congress

  
Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress

  
Jeff Van Drew  
Member of Congress

  
Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

  
Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

CC: FRA Administrator Ronald Batory