



*A bold voice for transportation workers*

March 3, 2015

**Vote YES on H.R. 749 – the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015  
Vote NO on the McClintock Amendment to Defund and Bankrupt Amtrak**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to support H.R. 749 – the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015 (PRRIA) – when it is considered by the full House. H.R. 749 funds and sustains an important component of our national transportation system, and we commend the leadership of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for crafting this bipartisan compromise bill that passed the Committee unanimously. We also urge you to vote NO on an amendment offered by Rep. McClintock that would eliminate all federal funding for Amtrak and cripple passenger rail in this country.

PRRIA reauthorizes Amtrak for the next four years, makes certain improvements to rail infrastructure, and provides greater certainty to Amtrak and its employees as they implement long-term modernization plans. The bill also authorizes an additional \$300 million for the Intercity Passenger Rail Program – to be split between the Northeast Corridor and other national routes – that will help strengthen our national passenger rail network and create more diverse and reliable travel options for the public. The bill also codifies Buy America standards for the purchase of Amtrak's rolling stock and track improvements through the established RRIF financing provisions.

Most importantly, PRRIA rejects wrongheaded reform proposals to privatize Amtrak, break up the operation, and outsource good middle-class jobs. In doing so, the legislation affirms the need for a national Amtrak system as part of America's interconnected transportation infrastructure.

We do, however, remain concerned that H.R. 749 does not provide Amtrak with the funding levels required to meet the needs of an aging system and the demands Americans have for more passenger rail options. Amtrak carried nearly 31 million passengers in FY 2014, and has set ridership records in 10 of the last 12 years. This comes at a time when insufficient budgets and bare-bones federal appropriations have allowed the system to age and deteriorate. As Amtrak's annual budget requests have established, its aging fleet needs replacing and the system faces significant and disruptive renovations to tracks, bridges, tunnels, and other infrastructure in the coming years. The authorization levels set in this bill – which would level out funding at current appropriations levels – do not provide the funds needed for these long-term improvements.

**Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**

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Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer

Given the clear needs of our passenger rail system and the support Amtrak enjoys from riders and communities across this nation, we are dismayed that Rep. McClintock is offering an amendment that would zero out federal funding for our national passenger rail carrier. We are strongly opposed to this misguided amendment and urge you to vote against it when it is considered. Quite frankly, we would have hoped that the debate over defunding and bankrupting Amtrak would be over – every mode of transportation needs some type of federal support to survive and operate efficiently and passenger rail is no different. Amtrak has made significant improvements to its service and is now an important driver of jobs and economic development that should be supported by our elected leaders. The McClintock amendment would take us in the opposite direction, effectively gutting our nation's passenger rail network and completely undercutting the important work this bill accomplishes.

House passage of this legislation is an important step in bringing long-term stability and investment to Amtrak and its workforce. We urge you to vote NO on the McClintock amendment and YES on final passage of PRRRA, and look forward to working with you to create the passenger rail network that Americans want and deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

Edward Wytkind  
President