

Statement of Ross B. Capon, President & CEO, National Association of Railroad Passengers

for the April 10, 2013, hearing of the House Committee on Transportation

The National Association of Railroad Passengers is grateful for the positive work done by Gov. Corbett and his staff, PennDOT, key legislators and Amtrak which have led to agreement on how to continue Amtrak's New York-Pittsburgh service consistent with Section 209 of the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA).

We support the testimony of Kenneth Joseph of Western Pennsylvanians for Passenger Rail. I am proud to note that he also serves as a member of our association's national Council of Representatives.

Positive action on the *Pennsylvanian* service, combined with your continuing support of the Harrisburg-Philadelphia Keystone service, puts the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the forefront of state efforts to provide another meaningful transportation choice that is in high demand.

This is reflected in the rapid growth in Amtrak ridership. Amtrak ridership from 1997 to 2012 at 55% grew faster than domestic aviation ridership (20%), highway vehicle-miles traveled (16.5%), U.S. population (17%) and real gross domestic product (37%).

Just yesterday, Amtrak announced that its "ridership increased in the first half of FY 2013 (Oct. 2012 – March 2013) and March set a record as the single best month ever in the history of America's Railroad®. In addition, October, December, and January each set individual monthly records." For the six months ending March 31, the *Pennsylvanian* with 17.4% ridership growth from the year-earlier months had the third strongest showing among all Amtrak routes.

Thank you for considering our comments and thank you again for the work that went into saving the *Pennsylvanian*.

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