

Rican unit known as the Borinqueneers. Today, I rise to urge the President to expedite the designing and the delivery of this medal before more of these brave Borinqueneers pass away.

More than 100,000 Borinqueneers served in World War I, World War II, and the Korean war. Puerto Ricans have fought for the United States as far back as the American Revolution, and they continue to do so honorably to this day. Thousands have given their lives defending our country, despite enduring decades of prejudice against them.

The Borinqueneers have been recognized with Distinguished Service Crosses, Silver Stars, Bronze Stars, and Purple Hearts. However, it was not until last year that the first member of the Borinqueneers, Master Sergeant Juan E. Negron, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, following a congressionally ordered review of cases involving potential prejudice.

Today, hundreds of Borinqueneers have made my home of central Florida their home. It is my goal and my honor as their Representative to ensure that they receive this long overdue recognition.

Puerto Rican veterans should not have to wait any longer to receive the equal treatment they deserve. Today, I ask the President to ensure that the Borinqueneers receive their Congressional Gold Medal as soon as possible.

BUILD TRUST

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Homeland Security Committee and one who was in a security briefing this morning, I cannot celebrate more to the brave men and women of the Department of Homeland Security that many of us stood up collectively together as Americans and provided for full funding. Let me thank them for their service.

Let me move on. Yesterday, another very provocative and important action was done. The Department of Justice report came out regarding the city of Ferguson, where it found that Blacks account for 85 percent of traffic stops, 90 percent of tickets issued, and 93 percent of arrests.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about Ferguson, though many are trying to heal—and we offer sympathy again to Michael Brown's family—but it is about America. I call upon my Republican friends and Democratic friends. We act on facts. These are facts that are probably implicated across America.

I have introduced the Build TRUST bill. I hope we can come together to find a way, both in terms of our law enforcement and making sure that they go home to their families, but also have a just and fair pattern, if you will, of treating the citizens of every hamlet

and town and city and State in this Nation. We owe that to our beliefs in the Constitution, Mr. Speaker.

I encourage a bipartisan effort to look at how we can address these questions across America. We deserve that as Americans.

PASSENGER RAIL REFORM AND INVESTMENT ACT

(Ms. FRANKEL of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act, and I appreciate the bipartisan work of our committee leaders.

Florida is the third largest State in the Nation with a growing population, booming tourism, and expanding trade opportunities. That means more trains and more cars transporting more people and cargo over our 458 rail crossings in south Florida.

That is why stakeholders in south Florida are pleased that this rail bill authorizes \$150 million per year for 4 years for State and local governments in our region to upgrade the safety features at grade crossings and improve traffic coordination to prevent accidents and ease congestion.

Transportation moves our economy. The rail bill facilitates it to be done safely and efficiently. I urge its approval.

PASSENGER RAIL REFORM AND INVESTMENT ACT OF 2015

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 749.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARDY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 134 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 749.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1235

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 749) to reauthorize Federal support for passenger rail programs, and for other purposes, with Mr. HARRIS in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentleman from

Oregon (Mr. DEFazio) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I want to begin by thanking Chairman DENHAM and Ranking Members DEFazio and CAPUANO, who have all worked well on this bill together. I also would like to thank Ms. BROWN who, in the last Congress, when this bill started on its path, to thank her for her great work. Ms. BROWN is from the State of Florida.

Since I became chairman of the Railroad Subcommittee in the 112th Congress and since I have become chairman of the full committee, this has been one of my top priorities: to pass a bipartisan passenger rail bill that reforms Amtrak. I am so happy to be here on the floor today with the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015.

The previous passenger rail bill passed in 2008 and resulted in some real improvements to Amtrak, which we are seeing today. Ridership is up 14 percent; revenue is up 37 percent; and, in the Northeast corridor, the profits are up an amazing 250 percent.

The last bill created the Northeast Corridor Commission, which has helped the States, Amtrak, and DOT finally work together on planning the future of the corridor; however, more work needs to be done to help Amtrak maximize its strengths and tackle some of its longstanding challenges.

That is why we introduced the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015. I know some of my colleagues are skeptical about Amtrak and passenger rail in general. Because of its current structure, Amtrak's finances have not been transparent to either Congress or to consumers.

The profits on the Northeast corridor have subsidized money-losing routes, masking the true cost of these services. This bill makes significant reforms to eliminate those issues.

In particular, we focus on the Northeast corridor in this bill, which truly is a nationally significant transportation corridor. With 18 percent of our population and 20 percent of our GDP produced in the Northeast corridor on 3 percent of our land mass, it is the most densely populated area of the United States and one of the most densely populated in the world, so passenger rail is needed.

By separating Amtrak into business lines, the Northeast corridor profits stay in the corridor, allowing for more investment there. Setting the other business lines apart allows the corporation to make better-informed business decisions about those lines' operations. This will help make Amtrak's operations much more transparent for both the States and the Congress.

By focusing our resources on the Northeast corridor and existing corridors where passenger rail makes sense, we will help to improve passenger rail without breaking the bank.

Finally, we also provide environmental review streamlining reforms for rail projects, something that is important to not only passenger rail, but it also will include freight rail in these environmental reviews, which will help them to be able to expand their rail network to help America move its freight more effectively and efficiently.

It is something we are already doing in highway and transit and water infrastructure projects. This will help make our limited Federal dollars go further because we all know time is money when dealing with infrastructure projects.

I know on both sides of the aisle—my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to do more and have more money invested, which I understand, and there needs to be more investment. My colleagues on my side of the aisle think we may be spending too much money.

These reforms are going to move Amtrak in a positive direction. It is not going to solve all of our problems today, but I think it substantially moves the ball down the field to get to a point where someday maybe Amtrak can stand on its own two feet.

This debate has been raging in this assembly for the last 40 or so years. My colleagues on the other side point out that no passenger rail operates without subsidies. They are correct.

Also, there is only one freight rail system in the world that doesn't get subsidies, and that is in the United States of America, our freight rail system. I think we can move Amtrak in that direction.

My colleagues on my side of the aisle argue, Amtrak has been a failure, let's get rid of it. I don't think that is the answer either because, as I mentioned earlier, there are places in this country that desperately need to have an expanded passenger rail service.

When the United States is moving towards 400 million people, we are going to need that passenger rail service in various parts of this country. We need to make sure that we are building today a better Amtrak to serve the future of the American people and of a people that is growing.

This is a bipartisan bill, so neither side got everything that it wants, but it is a good strong reform bill that I firmly believe will significantly improve Amtrak.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I look forward to working with the Senate to take it to the President's desk.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the chairman, Chairman SHUSTER, from Pennsylvania; subcommittee chairman Mr. DENHAM; and the ranking member serving on our side, MIKE CAPUANO, for a bill that is an okay bill.

This is in the tradition, the greatest tradition, of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which we

have differences, as the chairman pointed out, over the future of rail and the funding levels that are needed, but there is consensus that this is important to the country, and we can continue that debate as we continue to improve the operations of Amtrak.

An awful lot of the focus is on the Northeast corridor. That is essentially the "cash cow." In the Northeast corridor now in the rail-air market, 78 percent of the D.C.-New York travelers are now using the train. That is a success story. There is a lot of focus on that, but Amtrak is bigger than that. We are a large nation.

I remember after 9/11, when I had a Federal official here from my region, head of the Bonneville Power Administration, and he needed to get back for some important meetings in the West, he took the train. There was no plane option.

Maintaining a national network, I believe, is essential. We need to keep that perspective in mind as we look at Amtrak as a whole, not just a corridor in one of the most populated parts of the country.

In the West, we have two long-distance trains: the Coast Starlight from Seattle through Portland, Eugene, down to Los Angeles; and the Empire Builder, which starts in Seattle and Portland, converges in Spokane—kind of a unique route—and continues on to Chicago.

We also have a State-supported route in Oregon, which is an international route. It goes from Eugene, Oregon, to Vancouver, British Columbia. Ridership last year was almost up to 1 million on that route, as Interstate 5 becomes more and more problematic and congested, particularly over the line in Washington State. These are essential assets to give people an alternative.

I would also say that we need to be planning for a better future. Last year, Oregon did get about a \$20 million grant through the Intercity Passenger Rail grant program to finish planning and preliminary engineering work for the possibility of a higher-speed route—not high speed. Unfortunately, that is not in the cards in the near future.

We have a wonderful train set, an Acela train set, which can travel a lot faster than it can now because of the current routing and congestion. We are planning on doing that, working cooperatively with the freight railroads and also looking at some alternative routes for at least part of that train.

I would also point out that this bill, the railroads themselves, the freight railroads, which the chairman mentioned, are investing a phenomenal amount of money in upgrading their track, their systems, and their power; but there are still a lot of projects that are undone and don't have potential revenue sources, particularly for the short lines.

□ 1245

I am really pleased that this bill streamlines the Railroad Rehabilita-

tion and Improvement Financing Program, RRIIF. It sounds like something my dog would say. In any case, this is sort of a very infinitely bureaucratic and lengthy process. The bill requires that the loans be done within 45 days of getting a complete application, and it also contains strong Buy America provisions. It will be all American steel, iron, and manufactured goods. I think that is an improvement on two levels, and that is a needed change.

Finally, as the chairman said, there are some of us on this side of the aisle who believe we should be making more investment so that Amtrak can have a program to acquire more power, so it can make improvements on some of the very aged and decrepit parts of the Neck here and in other places where they have critical infrastructure needs around the country. That was not to be in this bill, but this bill does leave us that option in the future. I strongly—and I believe most on this side of the aisle will strongly—support this legislation.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HARDY).

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today as a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to support this bill.

I believe it will bring efficiency, savings, and greater transparency to Amtrak. Instead of increasing government interference, this bill will actually create development opportunities for the private sector and encourage non-Federal participation by unlocking new revenue streams. This bill is common sense and straightforward. It reduces red tape by streamlining environmental issues.

As a former small business owner, it makes perfect sense to me that we direct Amtrak to target investments where there is the best potential for success and conduct a thorough cost-benefit analysis for long distance routes.

Finally, I am excited to further empower States to have a greater role in managing their routes. States must be equal partners with a greater say in ensuring that the residents—Amtrak passengers—get the best benefit. That is why, Mr. Chairman, I stand in support of this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015. This bill authorizes \$7 billion for passenger rail, including \$5.8 billion for Amtrak, over the next 4 years.

This bill is not perfect, but I appreciate the committee leadership's efforts to develop a bill in a bipartisan manner.

This bill significantly reforms the way Amtrak funding is authorized.

Rather than authorizing separate appropriations for debt service, capital, and operating expenses, the bill creates two new accounts—a Northeast corridor account and a national network account. The bill also creates a new program to provide grants to the States, funded at \$300 million annually, of which \$150 million is dedicated to the Northeast corridor.

The Northeast corridor region contains 4 of the 10 largest metropolitan areas in the country. It is home to more than 51 million people, and our regional economy is the fifth-largest in the world between France and Germany. If the Northeast corridor were to unexpectedly shut down for just one day, the potential impact on the U.S. economy could be \$100 million in transportation-related impacts and productivity losses.

There is no question that it is absolutely in our national interest to do everything we can to maintain and develop the Northeast corridor, but New Yorkers also understand the importance of maintaining a national network, so I am pleased that the bill grants Amtrak the flexibility to transfer funds, if needed, to keep the national rail system operational. The bill also requires a more detailed plan for implementing specific improvements to the Northeast corridor that is free of poison pill, antilabor provisions, and it applies Buy America to the RRIF loan program.

All of this is good, but we cannot lose sight of the bigger picture, which is that we are still woefully underfunding Amtrak. We spend more than \$50 billion per year on highways and transit and over \$15 billion on aviation, while Amtrak is just \$1.4 billion, or less than 2 percent, of Federal transportation spending. This is despite the fact that the rail system needs at least \$52 billion, or \$2.6 billion per year, for 20 years just to meet ridership demands and bring the system into a state of good repair.

The President's FY16 budget request, on the other hand, includes \$5 billion for rail. Half of that is intended to bring public rail assets throughout the country to a state of good repair, including \$550 million for the Northeast corridor; \$2 billion is for high-speed rail and commuter rail; and \$204 million is for the FRA rail safety measures, proven to be so necessary by the accidents on Metro North in New York and Connecticut.

Unfortunately, this bill before us today simply authorizes current funding levels, but given the budget constraints imposed by the majority, it is probably the best bill we can hope for right now if we want to move a bipartisan bill.

I would like to thank Chairman SHUSTER and Ranking Member DEFAZIO for their efforts to advance an Amtrak reauthorization bill that moves the process forward. I look forward to working with them and the rest of my colleagues to make sure passenger rail re-

ceives the attention and resources it deserves. For now, this is a good bill, and I urge its adoption.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, it is now my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO), the newest member of the T&I Committee.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this bipartisan solution to enhance passenger rail networks and strengthen this country's transportation infrastructure.

Amtrak's Northeast and Keystone rail lines are a critical thread in the transportation fabric of my district in southeastern Pennsylvania. For me, Amtrak equals SEPTA, in many respects, as 90 percent of the 2,000 daily train rides along the Northeast corridor are regional commuter lines like SEPTA.

This important legislation does something very significant, Mr. Chairman. It keeps revenues generated on the Northeast corridor for reinvestment along the Northeast corridor. It compels Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, and States to work together to develop and implement a 5-year Northeast corridor capital investment plan. For my district, it offers more promise for the Schuylkill Metro project, for the concept of utilizing existing rail beds known as the Green Line along route 29 in Montgomery and Chester Counties. And of course, it makes available more Federal funding for new train stations to replace aging train stations such as Paoli and Downingtown.

I want to thank Chairman SHUSTER and Chairman DENHAM for their smart, reasoned approach and for their leadership in strengthening the passenger rail network. This is a great bill. It is great for southeastern Pennsylvania, and it is great for this country.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank Ranking Member CAPUANO for yielding me this time.

I want to thank the capable chairman of the committee, Mr. SHUSTER, and the chairman and the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. DEFAZIO, for bringing this important Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act before us.

Mr. Chairman, as the Representative of the busiest Amtrak station in Ohio at Toledo and the Amtrak stations in Sandusky and Elyria-Lorain, I rise to urge the passage of this important bill to continue and advance passenger rail service across our Nation.

When I was born, the population of the United States was 146 million people. Today, it surpasses 320 million. By 2020, our Nation's population is projected to reach over half a billion people—over 500 million. As time moves forward, the necessity for passenger rail will become clearer with each passing day.

Many of our major urban centers are clogged with traffic jams daily, and the

railroads across my region of our continent have severe freight rail and passenger rail conflicts because they are forced to use the same tracks. Imagine that we are living in the 21st century, and we are still tethered to 19th century rail pathways.

Passenger rail travel in Ohio is booming despite these constraints—up from 108,000 passengers in 2007 to 160,000 passengers in 2013. A trend in my district has grown as well, with Toledo passengers on the northwest Ohio corridor increasing from 53,000 to 77,000 over the same time. Imagine the traffic jams if all of these individuals traveled by car instead of rail.

It is not just the northeastern part of our Nation that needs added attention to passenger rail service, as important as that is. It should also include the Great Lakes Region. The corridor that stretches the length of my district and connects our industrial heartland corridor from Pittsburgh to Cleveland to Sandusky to Toledo to Gary to Chicago needs special attention, too.

During an extended stretch last year, between July and September, the Capitol Limited, which runs from Washington, D.C., to Chicago and includes my northern Ohio stretch, completed only 2.7 percent of its trips on time—2.7 percent out of 100 percent on time. The dramatic increase of freight rail consistently bumps passenger service. We need both, but what we have are these lengthy delays to passenger service across our vast region.

I have two articles I would like to insert into the RECORD detailing these troubles.

[From the Blade]

AMTRAK TRAINS OFTEN TRICKLE INTO TOLEDO
AFTER RASH OF DELAYS

(By David Patch)

Christine Smith boarded Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited in Chicago on Tuesday night to visit a friend in Toledo.

The train left Chicago two hours late and made it only about 15 miles to Indiana's northwest corner, where it sat for about three hours, Ms. Smith recalled. By the time it got to Toledo, it was six hours behind schedule.

It was only the latest of a series of late Amtrak trains the Melbourne, Australia, resident said she had encountered since arriving in Los Angeles last month and riding from there to San Francisco, Portland, Ore., Spokane, and Chicago.

Late trains are nothing new for Amtrak, particularly for the overnight, long-distance trains such as those that serve Toledo—the Lake Shore Limited and Capitol Limited. Trains running more than three hours late have become the norm recently, and they have often lost that much or more just on the Chicago-Toledo portion of trips. The Capitol Limited was 12 hours behind schedule on Sunday.

While there have been exceptions, by far the biggest obstacle to Amtrak's time-keeping across northern Indiana and northern Ohio has been tracks blocked by freight trains belonging to Norfolk Southern, which owns and operates the line Amtrak uses between Chicago and Cleveland.

"It's absolutely unbelievable what they're doing to the American people. It's a fraud," Ms. Smith said. "Every train I've been on

has been late leaving and late arriving, and freight trains are given as the reason.”

During the 12 months that ended in August, Capitol Limited trains arrived at their end stations in Chicago or Washington within 30 minutes of schedule only 22.5 percent of the time, while the Lake Shore reached Chicago or New York on time 30.8 percent of the time, according to Amtrak.

But August itself was significantly worse, and September data, when available, is unlikely to show improvement. In August, the best performer was the eastbound Lake Shore, which reached New York within 30 minutes of schedule 6.5 percent of the time—two trips. The westbound was late into Chicago every day of the month, and the Capitol Limiteds arrived on time once in each direction.

Late westbound arrivals in Chicago also translate to late eastbound departures, because Amtrak lacks spare equipment in Chicago to make up replacement trains when equipment arrives late, and it also does not have enough engineers and conductors to always have an extra train crew ready to replace one that has worked the maximum 12-hour shift set by federal regulation.

Marc Magliari, an Amtrak spokesman in Chicago, laid even the late departures from Chicago at Norfolk Southern's feet.

“If the train is late getting to Chicago, it's most likely going to be late eastbound while we're servicing equipment and getting proper rest for our crews,” Mr. Magliari said. “The result is to drive up our costs, dissatisfy our passengers, and create ‘never again’ riders.”

While its ridership pales in comparison to major stations like New York and Chicago, Toledo historically has been Amtrak's busiest Ohio stop, and its ridership has declined of late.

After peaking at more than 90,000 riders in 2010 and 2011, Toledo's Amtrak ridership dropped to 87,073 in 2012 and 86,252 last year, according to statistics provided to the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority, which owns the Toledo station.

During the first seven months of 2014, Amtrak's Toledo ridership has fallen by another 7 percent, those statistics show.

David Pidgeon, a Norfolk Southern spokesman, said the freight-train backlog is a product of “more trains and capacity challenges in the corridor between Chicago and Cleveland” because the freight traffic exceeds what the company handled before the 2008 recession.

“We generally have a cooperative relationship with Amtrak because we are each other's landlords,” Mr. Pidgeon said. “We run on their network and they run on ours, so there's plenty of business and personal incentive to keep the cooperation going.”

“We want to keep freight and passenger trains moving, period.”

One of the busiest pieces of railroad in the entire United States, Norfolk Southern's double-track main has become, to varying degrees, an obstacle course of stopped and slow-moving freight trains.

A particular growth area has been oil shipments from the Bakken oilfields of North Dakota to terminals on the East Coast, rail traffic that simply didn't exist before 2009 but now accounts for dozens of trains through Toledo each week.

RAIL EXPANSION

Norfolk Southern is building a third main track between Chesterton and Gary, Ind., a 30-mile section that is the busiest stretch of the region's busiest freight railroad. It includes several major junctions and runs through the heart of one of America's most heavily industrialized areas, the steel mills and a major oil refinery along Lake Michigan's southern shore. Until that third track

is ready for use, its construction is impairing train traffic.

When only one track is open for trains, traffic only goes one way while opposing trains wait. The spot where Ms. Smith's train stopped is near the west end of the Chesterton-Gary construction zone. LaPorte, Ind.—where the Chicago-bound Amtrak trains from Toledo have often sat for hours in recent weeks—is near the east end.

And not only have passenger trains to and from Toledo been affected by that problem, so too have Amtrak's five daily round-trip trains between Chicago and Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Port Huron, Mich., which use the same rails west of Chesterton.

The third track in northwest Indiana is one of several capacity-improvement projects under way on Norfolk Southern in the region.

Most prominent among the others is a \$160 million expansion of the Bellevue, Ohio, yard, which will double in size when the project is done later this year, easing congestion at other yards, Mr. Pidgeon said.

That “will ease the demand for space in Elkhart and hopefully significantly reduce transit times for our freight trains, keeping us moving and the network fluid,” he said.

Norfolk Southern has 50 new locomotives soon to be delivered and also has bought several hundred used ones in the past year or two to address shortages.

It also is hiring close to 100 new train conductors in the Toledo area and has transferred 120 more from other parts of its system to the Cleveland-Chicago corridor to alleviate crew shortages, Mr. Pidgeon said.

The Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers, an advocacy group, cites another factor in the freight-train delays: An automated dispatching system Norfolk Southern has been introducing on portions of its rail network during the past two years.

The system, called the Auto-Router, is designed to mimic a job human train dispatchers have done for years—deciding which trains run on which tracks at what time. The automated system could supplement that work, allowing the human dispatchers to work larger territories, or eventually it could replace them.

Train dispatching is a job with a lot of variables because freight trains don't all travel at the same speed. Some are long, heavy, and slow; others are short and, ideally, fast.

Hills, track repairs, and certain trains' need to stop at yards along the way to pick up or drop off cars also can factor into how trains are dispatched.

Critics of the system including OARP—also known as All Aboard Ohio—and Norfolk Southern sources who spoke on condition of anonymity because they're not authorized to talk to reporters said the Auto-Router system's flaws are contributing to the railroad's congestion.

PASSENGER COMPLAINTS

While Amtrak riders interviewed by The Blade said they understand how the passenger trains are at the freight railroads' mercy, some said the passenger-train operator could handle the situation better, too.

Jean McGraw of Port Clinton, who boarded the Boston-bound Lake Shore in Sandusky in late September to visit a sister in New Hampshire, said she and her travel companion got two emails “in the middle of the night” about train delays but got no updates after that.

And when the bus Ms. McGraw and other Boston-bound passengers rode from Albany got to Boston at 4 a.m. the next day, the station there was locked. The passengers cajoled the bus driver into letting them take shelter in a neighboring bus garage, she said.

“That was it—it was ridiculous,” Ms. McGraw said.

As compensation, Amtrak offered vouchers good toward future train travel. Ms. McGraw said she hopes to use hers once the current problems are resolved, but her companion swore off train travel because of the experience.

Untested is whether Norfolk Southern's handling of Amtrak violates a 1973 federal law directing the freight railroads to give the passenger trains preferential handling.

A more recent federal law, passed in 2008, directed the Federal Railroad Administration and Amtrak to develop performance standards for Amtrak trains.

However, a later appellate court ruling stalled this. According to the rail passengers association, Amtrak's overall on-time performance has plummeted since that 2013 ruling, which is the subject of a pending Supreme Court appeal.

Dan McMackin, a United Parcel Service spokesman, said his company has recently changed the train routes it uses to move packages in response to train delays, though he did not confirm that the company specifically removed its cargo from the Norfolk Southern route.

“We have seen some recent lower reliability in several lanes and are adjusting accordingly, with guidance from our rail service partners as to appropriate network corrections,” Mr. McMackin said. “While there have been lanes affected over the last several months, we expect long-term reliability to return and most of our adjustments are seen as temporary.”

But while UPS may be ready to send packages back to the Cleveland-Toledo-Chicago corridor once Norfolk Southern's problems are resolved, Amtrak could have a harder time winning back Tanya Miller, of Taylor, Mich., one of the riders who boarded the New York-bound train in Toledo on Wednesday morning.

“This is my first time and my very last time taking Amtrak,” she said. “I'm not recommending Amtrak to anyone.”

[From The Plain Dealer]

SOLUTIONS SOUGHT FOR CHRONIC AMTRAK,
FREIGHT TRAIN DELAYS IN NORTHERN OHIO

(By Alison Grant)

CLEVELAND, OH.—Passengers sitting on the tracks one recent morning near an idled Lake Shore Limited train in Cleveland had a lot of time to kill.

Their eastbound train was late getting out of Chicago Union Station and pulled into Cleveland about 3½ hours after its scheduled arrival of 5:35 a.m.

Then a switch problem or a downed power line on the CSX tracks between downtown Cleveland and Collinwood—reports varied—meant another delay of five hours before the Amtrak train pulled out of town.

Ed and Rosemary Sobala, heading home to Buffalo after a train trip to the canyon-lands of Arizona, Utah and Nevada, weren't too surprised.

Not one of the Amtraks on their two-week journey was on time, they said. In fact, not one was less than 5½ hours late. When the Lake Shore Limited was stalled in Cleveland, they were headed home to Buffalo—four hours away by car.

“A number of us riders jokingly referred to an Amtrak schedule as a wish list more than a schedule,” Ed Sobala said.

Delays like this—and they're chronic nationwide, including along northern Ohio's east-west corridor, for both Amtrak passenger trains and freight trains—have prompted three of this region's metropolitan planning organizations to set up a rail alliance to work on improving what is the fastest-growing U.S. transportation mode in the 21st century.

"Passenger rail ridership has increased dramatically, but specifically on that corridor," said Grace Gallucci, executive director of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, which joined with the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments and the Erie County Regional Planning Commission to form the Northern Ohio Rail Alliance.

"And the freight railroads are aggressively pursuing increasing their capacity."

Gallucci attributes the increase in passenger rail traffic to economics and demographics—high gas prices, expensive air fares, Millennials more interested in public transportation than their parents.

Four daily passenger trains carry enough passengers to fill a dozen Boeing 737s each day along the tracks in northern Ohio, according to the advocacy group All Aboard Ohio, and 70 daily freight trains carry about 20,000 truckload equivalents of cargo.

Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited service, from Chicago through Ohio to New York City and Boston, averages 1,100 passengers a day.

One of the rail alliance's first goals is to persuade the Ohio Department of Transportation to release \$938,000 that Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur secured in 2010 for rail planning.

The money was earmarked for ODOT to study high-speed rail, but that project was scrubbed by Gov. John Kasich when he took office. Kasich said high-speed rail was a "money pit" because it would cost the state about \$17 million a year to maintain and operate, with no guarantee enough tickets could be sold to cover the expenses.

The train money has been sitting in ODOT's accounts since.

"The study area has changed many times," agency spokesman Steve Faulkner explained.

"Most recently, folks in northern Ohio changed (it) to include a review of the Cleveland to Toledo route. That's new. For that reason, all interested parties...must again meet in person to discuss and agree on details of the study plan."

ODOT last week set up a meeting for Oct. 28 to discuss the funding, Gallucci said.

The Northern Ohio Rail Alliance and All Aboard Ohio say redesigning the Amtrak stations in northern Ohio would do a lot to improve rail service. Trains stopping at Cleveland, Elyria and Sandusky can process passengers from only one track of the two-track railway.

That requires trains to "slalom" between tracks, and during the crossover, both tracks at the station are occupied. Opposing rail traffic must stop. The result: At least 80 minutes of delay to the four passenger trains that arrive nightly at each station, and as much or more delay to freight traffic.

The station in Toledo can process passengers from both tracks but only at ground-level walkways not platforms.

Gallucci said rail projects should qualify for money overseen by ODOT's Transportation Review Advisory Council—which typically deals with projects that add capacity to Ohio roads. She said rail station work also should be eligible for money the state is raising for ODOT projects by letting the Ohio Turnpike issue bonds that will be paid off with toll increases.

"We have to get away from this idea that every transportation mode competes against the others," Gallucci said.

Record high oil shipments from the Bakken Fields in the Dakotas to East Coast refineries have added to freight delays, including in Cleveland.

Of the 60 to 90 freight trains that rumble daily through Northeast Ohio on the tracks owned and operated by Norfolk Southern,

nine are oil trains. And that's due to grow by another 18 trains in coming months, said Ken Prendergast, All Aboard Ohio executive director.

In September, officials representing agricultural, auto and chemical industries told a Senate committee that widespread delays in freight shipments were affecting an array of industries and forcing some out of business. The Associated Press reported that lawmakers displayed a photo of a giant mound of wheat languishing in North Dakota because farmers couldn't get a railroad company to ship it.

Jonathan Fields and Jacquie Mon, traveling on the Empire Builder from Portland, Oregon to Albany, New York, were delayed five hours in Minot, North Dakota, when their train was put on a siding track while oil trains moved past.

"We thought Amtrak trains had priority to the freight-owned rails if they were within a certain window of time," Mon wrote in an email. "I spent some time Googling the subject and learned about the oil trains, the judge who ruled that it wasn't legal to require the freight trains to give Amtrak priority and that his decision was being appealed."

Then came the hang-up in Cleveland, a stone's throw from FirstEnergy Stadium.

"If there had been a game, we would have had enough time for a leisurely tailgate party, time to settle into our seats and watch the teams warmup, enjoy—more or less—the game, and time for drinks and play-calls second guessing after the game," Fields said.

Sobala said he concluded that Amtrak isn't reliable for travelers on firm schedules.

"One couple departed the sleeper car with their luggage during the delay in Cleveland," he said. "They decided to fly to New York because they had an appointment they couldn't miss. I last saw them get in a cab headed for the Cleveland airport."

Ms. KAPTUR. Customers are understandably frustrated. Our region needs customer-convenient hours and passenger-friendly arrivals and departures. Our Great Lakes Region needs a capital investment plan, too, for passenger service. We need evaluation for State-supported routes. Our region needs expedited attention, methodology development, and service planning to remedy growing congestion inefficiencies that benefit no one, not the freight lines, not the passenger service, and surely not the communities they are supposed to serve—nor connectivity to inner city passenger rail service.

I appreciate the efforts of Chairman SHUSTER and of Ranking Member DEFAZIO, as well as of Subcommittee Chair DENHAM and Ranking Member CAPUANO, in working together to produce this bill.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CAPUANO. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. KAPTUR. I ask that our vast Midwest industrial heartland region not be excluded for alternative passenger rail service pilot programs, opportunities for rail investment, station improvements, and historic preservation, nor for public-private partnerships that can advance modern passenger rail in this vital corridor of our country.

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, and I urge

the adoption of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM). He is one of the principal authors of this piece of legislation, the gentleman who did yeoman's work on this bill and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials.

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Chairman, there is a lot of talk about bipartisanship in this body. Oftentimes, a bill will come to the floor, and you may hope that one party or the other might throw some votes your way or that you might get some last-minute votes. True bipartisanship is what has happened on this committee.

I, Chairman SHUSTER, Ranking Member DEFAZIO, and Ranking Member CAPUANO have worked together to not only form a bipartisan bill but to actually educate every one of our Members. We want to talk to Members of both parties and now of even both Houses to make sure that we are actually reforming something that is going to create not only a more efficient system but create American jobs.

I want to thank each of those individuals for their willingness not only to work together but to work hard. It takes a lot of time to set up separate meetings with every single one of your colleagues in order to explain all of the intricacies on such a large bill. In this case, we have done that. We saw bipartisan and unanimous support first out of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee last year and now, this year, again, unanimous support out of the Rules Committee on a bill for which we get real structural reform.

After 35 years, this splits off the Northeast corridor. So, if you are riding the train on the Northeast corridor, your profits—the money that each rider is spending—will actually go back to fixing your rail. We make sure that you are upgrading the infrastructure, that you are creating jobs, and that you are creating a more efficient Amtrak. That is something the riders on the Northeast corridor should be proud of, and it should be a lesson for every other corridor across the country—that you get to keep your profits and improve your infrastructure and actually have greater ridership numbers in the process.

Amtrak has made some great strides. In this bill, we are cutting our authorizations by 40 percent. I think it is a great opportunity to actually highlight some of the successes that they have had but to also demand more.

This also defunds high-speed rail. We want to make sure that what is happening in California does not happen in the rest of the country. Where you have great rail projects going with higher speed—with high-speed moving into New York and Florida—we want to make sure that we don't have the same challenges that are plaguing California's high-speed rail, which has tripled in price.

We also have other conservative issues in here that will get rid of waste. That includes the food and beverage losses that we see year after year. We want to make sure that Amtrak is moving in the right direction to eliminate those losses.

□ 1300

This builds American infrastructure and creates jobs to fix century-old infrastructure problems. It unlocks the RRIF program, a program which has billions of dollars in it, yet every year when you are going to upgrade your infrastructure when you have a new project, this is one of the least areas that you want to work in because RRIF is so much of a challenge.

There are long timelines, long approval processes. If you are going to invest in something, you want to know: Am I going to win out this loan application, or is it something that is going to actually hinder or slow down our project?

We want to streamline that. We want to have those who need the access to capital that are going to improve our infrastructure to actually have the benefits of that program.

This introduces competition and leverages the private sector to reduce the Amtrak subsidies and actually use the stations to be more profitable. Amtrak has stations in many key cities that can be utilized to increase profits from everything from the restaurants and shopping that they have, but to also be able to advertise in those stations. And advertise on the right-of-way, the right of way that Amtrak has to be able to use billboards, set up cell sites. There is so much more profitability that we can have by having Amtrak as a partner.

I just want to touch on a couple of final issues.

One of the challenges that freight rails have is the red tape they have to go through on the environmental process and on the historical review process. In this reform bill, we are not saying that you don't have to go through that process; we are just saying that we are going to streamline it so you can go through it quickly. There ought to be timelines. You ought to be able to meet timelines so you can plan your infrastructure and you can plan those jobs so you can actually move America forward and move our rail forward at the same time.

This also empowers States. We have taken this reform bill to the next level. We reformed the State routes last PRIIA bill. We are doing it again this time to empower States to have more control over their routes. If a train is going to come through their district or their State, they ought to have some input on not only whether or not it is going to stop, but also increasing ridership in that process. They ought to have some skin in the game, and this allows them to do that.

One area that I want to mention that I think has created more bipartisan-

ship than anything else in this bill, and somebody else that should receive some recognition is actually my dog, Lilly, who will now be able to ride on the train.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SHUSTER. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. DENHAM. If you are on the Northeast corridor and you have never ridden the rail before because you have a pet that you either have to leave at home or a pet that you are going to drive because of, you will now have the opportunity to ride on Amtrak—not only in the Northeast corridor, but all across the country. This is something that we have had pet owners reach out to us on from every different State asking that they actually be able to do this.

I can take my dog back and forth to California on the airplane. I pay an additional fee to do that, but it is something that provides me the ability to be able to travel with my pet. Why wouldn't we do that same thing on Amtrak?

If Amtrak is looking for more riders, if they are looking for greater revenue, why wouldn't they be able to compete in this one more area with our airlines? I mean, this is a commonsense opportunity for those who want to take rail to actually be able to travel with their pet. I would like to say that it has been something that has not only helped us build a path, but brought on greater bipartisanism.

This bill has taken a lot of work. I appreciate the chairman's work and the ranking member's work on this. It has been a great bipartisan effort. I am looking forward to its passage today.

Mr. CAPUANO. I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, the Amtrak reauthorization before us today speaks volumes for the chairman and ranking member of our committee. It is the first Amtrak bill on the floor since 2008. It is a bipartisan bill. But, it also speaks volumes that Amtrak has performed so well without additional revenue.

This bill leaves Amtrak at about level funding, just a tiny bit more. When we call Amtrak "America's railroad," that is not a metaphor, Mr. Chairman. All of its stock is owned by the Department of Transportation. The reason for that is that the private sector in the 1970s found running a railroad to be a money-losing proposition and asked the Federal Government to take over Amtrak.

Amtrak, of course, is a fiction. It is structured as a private company. But like every railroad in the world, it is either subsidized by the government or the public cannot afford to ride. The bill has almost no new funding, but even without new funding, Amtrak has already scored great points.

Amtrak has essentially overseen the revival of train travel in the United

States of America, and it has done so in a way that the government can take almost no credit for. For example, ticket revenue was \$1.5 billion in 2005; then we go 5 years later to 2010, it is \$1.8 billion; and today, it is \$2.1 billion. Yet the average ticket has increased only \$5 every 5 years over that period of time. Amtrak knows what the market is about, and it has grown based on volume, not revenue. The railroad has seen phenomenal growth in passengers, reaching records as high as its highest record in 1988, when the equipment was much newer.

An important measure of efficiency is simply the number of seats filled. More Amtrak seats are filled today than at any time. Its on-time performance is above 80 percent, and that is amazing when you consider that Amtrak does not own most of the tracks it runs over. They are owned by the freight companies. The first cause of delay, frequent freight traffic. The second cause of delay, reduced speed needed for maintenance.

Amtrak has shown it knows how to run a railroad, and to run a railroad on time, but Amtrak needs to be able to run a 21st century railroad.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CAPUANO. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. NORTON. Until the Federal Government owns up to investing more in the railroad that we own, Amtrak will be running a 20th century railroad—or is it a 19th century railroad, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I really appreciate Chairman DENHAM coming up and talking about some of the important reforms in this bill. I want to add to that.

One of the key things we do in this bill is we are empowering the States. There are 19 States and 21 State-supported lines. I just look to Pennsylvania. I think they are a prime example of what happens when States work together with Amtrak.

Again, this bill, for my colleagues, especially on my side of the aisle who I hope are listening to this debate, we are going to empower those States to have equal say with Amtrak when you are investing dollars in these various lines around the country. An example is the Keystone line in Pennsylvania from Harrisburg to Philadelphia.

Several years ago, the State of Pennsylvania and Amtrak each invested \$100 million into that line. They decreased the travel time by about 20 minutes from Philadelphia to Harrisburg and Harrisburg to Philadelphia. They increased their reliability, and the ridership over the last several years has gone up almost 80 percent. This year, this first quarter, they are projecting they are going to make a profit on that line. That is exactly the kind of example that we in Congress need to look to.

My friends on both sides of the aisle, we can have a better Amtrak if we do

things more businesslike. The reforms that are in this bill are significant.

To name just a few of the lines that are State-supported:

The Heartland Flyer in Texas. And Texas right now is investing private dollars into rail. These lines that are State sponsored, it is going to help them develop these lines. Environmental reviews, streamlining the review process, that is going to help Texas when those dollars are invested.

If you look at to the Sacramento to San Francisco corridor, another State-sponsored line, when Amtrak and California get together, they can make improvements on that line to help the movement of people in that corridor.

Going to Virginia and Washington—Lynchburg, Newport News, Norfolk, and Richmond, Virginia, the State of Virginia and Amtrak can come together and make those investments. That is one of the fastest growing corridors in America. I know the folks who represent Norfolk and southern Virginia and Washington, D.C., a growing area, passenger rail is essential.

Another corridor is Raleigh, North Carolina, the technology corridor there in Raleigh connecting to the largest city in the Carolinas, Charlotte. Again, it is a State-sponsored line. It is going to give North Carolina the ability to work with Amtrak, to have power when they make those investments to upgrade those lines.

Again, there are 21 corridors in 19 States. This is really important. Some of our fast-growing Southern States, look at this bill. This bill empowers the States. It has the reforms. I believe that all Members should be able to support this as real reform and improving Amtrak.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time remains.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MCCLINTOCK). The gentleman from Massachusetts has 15 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN).

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Chairman, before I begin, let me thank Chairman SHUSTER and the ranking member for their leadership and hard work in bringing this bipartisan bill to the floor.

I know that both sides had other provisions that they wanted included in the bill. I personally wanted to include much more funding for Amtrak, but in the tradition of our committee, we compromised and developed a bill that ensures that our Nation's passenger rail system has an opportunity to thrive.

This legislation maintains long-distance routes, protects hardworking Amtrak employees, invests in the Northeast corridor, promotes minority opportunities in rail, improves access to the RRIF loan program, and takes another step forward in restoring passenger rail service to the Gulf States.

As more and more Americans turn to rail as their preferred mode of transportation, Amtrak is building the infrastructure and organization to meet this demand. Amtrak carried a record number of 31.6 million passengers in 2013. Their ridership has been growing across the system for over a decade, with last year's ridership numbers being the largest in history. Currently, they serve more than 500 destinations in 46 States and provide the only public transportation option for millions of rural Americans.

Let me repeat that. Currently, they serve more than 500 destinations in 46 States, and provide the only public transportation options for millions of rural Americans.

Amtrak has increased revenue, reduced debt, implemented new passenger service, improved their infrastructure, and purchased train sets that are being built in America with 100 percent American-made parts.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. CAPUANO. I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Amtrak reduces congestion, improves our energy independence, and it plays a vital role in emergency preparedness and recovery, as it did in the 9/11 bombings and Hurricane Katrina.

There is no perfect bill, but this is a perfect start, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support this legislation. Let's keep Amtrak moving forward.

As I close, I just want to be clear: I support this bill. I ask all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on Amtrak and move it forward.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS).

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I appreciate the hard work that went into this important legislation to ensure passenger rail service remains a viable option for travelers across the country. In particular, as a pet lover, I am very happy to see the language based on Chairman DENHAM's Pets on Trains legislation, which I am cosponsor of. But I do have concerns that the bill we are going to pass today doesn't set us on a course for building out services to parts of the country that do not now have access to passenger rail.

I represent Las Vegas, which welcomes more than 42 million people from around the world to our world-class resorts, casinos, restaurants, shopping, shows, et cetera. More and more of these visitors are coming from Asia and Europe, where rail services are accessible and efficient.

□ 1315

Unfortunately, the last Amtrak train to service Las Vegas departed from the station on Glitter Gulch behind the Union Plaza in May of 1977.

Over the past 18 years, Las Vegas has continued its transformation into the

premier international tourist destination. Since the trains stopped running, nearly a million more residents now call southern Nevada home and 10 million more people come to Las Vegas for work and play every year. This growth has put an enormous strain on our highways and airports.

While I will be supporting this legislation, I do hope, as the body advances further policies regarding passenger rail, we recognize the need to build out rail services to communities like Las Vegas, not just maintain the current system.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I understand the gentleman doesn't have any additional speakers, so I am prepared to close if he is ready to close.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, I echo everything that has been said. This bill is pretty good, and it deserves our support. I am looking forward to voting "yes" on this bill, and I am looking forward to getting it passed through the Senate.

I actually say, considering what is going on in Congress here now, this bill is my idea of a perfect situation. We didn't get everything we wanted; they didn't get everything some of their Members wanted, yet we are moving forward.

I congratulate the chairman and my ranking member, Mr. DEFAZIO, for being, in my opinion, the perfect type of Member of Congress: someone who knows what they want but also knows how to compromise to move a bill forward.

I am honored to be here today. I am honored to be working with such fine people.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. How much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. SHUSTER. I don't think I will use it all. I am sure any of my colleagues watching on TV are hoping I don't use it all also.

I want to close by just emphasizing again that this is truly a reform bill that was crafted in a bipartisan basis. There is significant reforms in here. It is going to make Amtrak more transparent. They are going to force these metrics to measure like businesses do. They haven't done that for the 40 years or so they have been in existence.

We have significant environmental streamlining, which not only benefits Amtrak projects, but it is going to benefit the freight rails, as they spend 18 percent of their revenues—almost \$30 billion—that they will invest across the class I railroads to go into their infrastructure, which is incredibly important to movement of freight in this country and having an efficient economy.

The bill also breaks out Amtrak into business lines, leaving the profits on the Northeast corridor—and the other profits on other corridors—but that is the biggest corridor, that is the one

that makes money, leaving it there to invest in that corridor.

By the way, as they reinvest those dollars, we can learn from what is happening on the Northeast corridor because there are corridors around this country that need to be developed because of the growing population. That is why we empower the States on those 21 State-sponsored lines.

On those 21 lines, States are going to have more power, more say—equal say, I will say—with Amtrak. As Texas develops their corridors down there, they are going to work with Amtrak—the North Carolina lines; the Virginia lines that run to Washington, D.C., and other places in Virginia; and California. Those State-sponsored lines are going to have the ability to make those investments with Amtrak to improve those lines.

I just want to talk again about the Keystone line because I think that is really a prime example of what can happen on a corridor when the State and Amtrak work together. Ridership is up almost 80 percent over the past several years. They are going to be projecting a profit in the first quarter this year, which is the first time in history.

When you do those kind of reforms, when you have transparency, when you give States power, when you streamline the environmental review process, those are the kind of good things that can happen.

Again, this is not perfect. Amtrak is not perfect, but we are moving the ball in the right direction. We are moving the ball so that we can see a better Amtrak and improved passenger rail.

I truly believe that you need passenger rail in this country, especially in some of these corridors—10, 11 corridors around this Nation where populations are growing. The population of the United States is growing, and we see the prime example of the Northeast corridor, 18 percent of the population on 3 percent of the land mass. They have to have passenger rail.

There are about 11 million riders, almost 12 million riders on Amtrak, but there are 250 million people that connect to Amtrak through the transit systems in the Northeast corridor. It is an incredible link that needs to be maintained, needs to be improved; and this bill, I believe, does that.

I would encourage all my Members to come to the floor today and vote in favor of this truly reform bill that will make Amtrak better and drive down what the Federal Government puts into that system. I think this bill does that. Again, I encourage the support of H.R. 749.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Chair, nearly two centuries ago we began to utilize rail for moving freight and people around our great nation. This technological leap helped to greatly expand our economy and bring together our vast continental nation.

Today, passenger rail still plays a key role in connecting population centers and moving

people to their places of work. It is vital that we continue to find new ways to improve and modernize our infrastructure to meet the demands of the modern world.

As a member of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee I am proud to support this important legislation because it will help to accomplish this important goal.

The Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act will assist in advancing large infrastructure projects through new partnerships with the private sector and states including giving states a greater role in managing routes.

It will more quickly advance those projects through streamlining the environmental processes, and it increases transparency for Amtrak which will require it to operate in a more businesslike manner.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation to give our nation a stronger and more vital passenger rail system.

Mr. SIREN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act. This is good, bipartisan legislation that will strengthen our nation's passenger rail system and create American jobs. My district in New Jersey sits along the Northeast Corridor, the busiest corridor in the Nation. In 2014, the Northeast Corridor saw a ridership of 11.6 million; its highest ridership year on record.

As ridership continues to grow, the necessity to invest in rail infrastructure becomes more vital. I am pleased that this bill will provide 1.9 billion dollars for capital improvements along the Northeast Corridor. This money will assist states with the opportunity to grow their passenger rail services, which in turn will help provide more affordable transportation options.

I am a strong supporter of the Buy America provisions that will ensure that American rail is built with American iron and steel. In addition to providing the capital and resources needed to bring the American rail system into the 21st Century, this legislation will help meet the growing demand for more cost-efficient and environmentally friendly means of transportation. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The Acting CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114-9. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 749

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the “Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015”.

(b) *TABLE OF CONTENTS.*—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Sec. 101. Authorization for Amtrak.

Sec. 102. Authorization for Amtrak Office of the Inspector General.

Sec. 103. National infrastructure investments.

Sec. 104. Northeast Corridor.

TITLE II—AMTRAK REFORM

Sec. 201. Amtrak planning and grant process.

Sec. 202. 5-Year capital and operating plan.

Sec. 203. State-supported routes.

Sec. 204. Route and service planning decisions.

Sec. 205. Competition.

Sec. 206. Food and beverage reform.

Sec. 207. Right of way leveraging.

Sec. 208. Station development.

Sec. 209. Amtrak debt.

Sec. 210. Amtrak pilot program for passengers transporting domesticated cats and dogs.

Sec. 211. Amtrak boarding procedures.

TITLE III—INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL POLICY

Sec. 301. Federal-State partnership for Northeast Corridor development and improvement.

Sec. 302. RRIF improvements.

Sec. 303. NEC fast forward.

Sec. 304. Large capital project requirements.

Sec. 305. Small business participation study.

Sec. 306. Gulf Coast rail service working group.

Sec. 307. Miscellaneous.

TITLE IV—PROJECT DELIVERY

Sec. 401. Project delivery rulemaking.

Sec. 402. Historic preservation of railroads.

TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS

Sec. 501. Definition.

Sec. 502. Title 49 definitions.

TITLE I—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 101. AUTHORIZATION FOR AMTRAK.

(a) *NORTHEAST CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT FUND.*—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for the use of Amtrak for deposit into the Northeast Corridor Improvement Fund account established under section 24319(a)(1) of title 49, United States Code (as added by section 201 of this Act), the following amounts:

(1) For fiscal year 2016, \$439,000,000.

(2) For fiscal year 2017, \$464,000,000.

(3) For fiscal year 2018, \$480,000,000.

(4) For fiscal year 2019, \$498,000,000.

(b) *NATIONAL NETWORK.*—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for the use of Amtrak for deposit into the National Network account established under section 24319(a)(2) of title 49, United States Code (as added by section 201 of this Act), the following amounts:

(1) For fiscal year 2016, \$973,000,000.

(2) For fiscal year 2017, \$974,000,000.

(3) For fiscal year 2018, \$985,000,000.

(4) For fiscal year 2019, \$997,000,000.

(c) *PROJECT MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT.*—The Secretary may withhold up to \$2,000,000 of the amount appropriated pursuant to subsection (a), and up to \$2,000,000 of the amount appropriated pursuant to subsection (b), for the costs of management oversight of Amtrak.

SEC. 102. AUTHORIZATION FOR AMTRAK OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for the Office of the Inspector General of Amtrak the following amounts:

(1) For fiscal year 2016, \$23,000,000.

(2) For fiscal year 2017, \$24,000,000.

(3) For fiscal year 2018, \$24,000,000.

(4) For fiscal year 2019, \$25,000,000.

SEC. 103. NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for capital grants

under chapter 244 of title 49, United States Code, and section 20154 of title 49, United States Code, the following amounts:

- (1) For fiscal year 2016, \$300,000,000.
- (2) For fiscal year 2017, \$300,000,000.
- (3) For fiscal year 2018, \$300,000,000.
- (4) For fiscal year 2019, \$300,000,000.

(b) **FEDERAL-STATE PARTNERSHIP FOR NORTHEAST CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT.**—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated under subsection (a), 50 percent for each fiscal year shall be available for carrying out section 24407 of title 49, United States Code, as added by section 301 of this Act.

(c) **PROJECT MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT.**—The Secretary may withhold up to ½ of 1 percent of amounts appropriated pursuant to chapter 244 of title 49, United States Code, for the costs of project management oversight of capital projects carried out pursuant to such chapter.

SEC. 104. NORTHEAST CORRIDOR.

For purposes of this title, the term “Northeast Corridor” means the Northeast Corridor main line between Boston, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia, and facilities and services used to operate and maintain that line.

TITLE II—AMTRAK REFORM

SEC. 201. AMTRAK PLANNING AND GRANT PROCESS.

(a) **REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES.**—

(1) **AMENDMENT.**—Chapter 243 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new sections:

“§24317. Costs and revenues

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, Amtrak shall establish and maintain internal controls to ensure Amtrak’s costs and revenues are allocated to either the Northeast Corridor or the National Network, including proportional shares of common and fixed costs.

“(b) **DEFINITION.**—For purposes of this chapter, the term ‘Northeast Corridor’ means the Northeast Corridor main line between Boston, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia, and facilities and services used to operate and maintain that line.

“§24318. Grant process

“(a) **PROCEDURES FOR GRANT REQUESTS.**—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, the Secretary of Transportation shall establish and transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate substantive and procedural requirements, including schedules, for grant requests under this section.

“(b) **GRANT REQUESTS.**—Amtrak shall transmit grant requests for Federal funds to be appropriated to the Secretary for the use of Amtrak to—

“(1) the Secretary; and

“(2) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

“(c) **CONTENTS.**—A grant request under subsection (b) shall—

“(1) provide a detailed financial analysis for the upcoming fiscal year for the Northeast Corridor, State-supported routes, and long-distance routes, including projections for the items listed in 24320(c)(1), as applicable, in comparison to prior fiscal year projections;

“(2) include a description of the work to be funded, along with cost estimates and an estimated timetable for completion of the projects covered by the request;

“(3) include an assessment of the continuing financial stability of Amtrak;

“(4) be displayed on Amtrak’s website within a reasonable timeframe following its submission to the entities described in subsection (b); and

“(5) be in similar format and substance to those submitted by executive agencies of the Federal Government.

“(d) **REVIEW AND APPROVAL.**—

“(1) **30-DAY APPROVAL PROCESS.**—The Secretary shall complete the review of a grant request and approve or disapprove the request not later than 30 days after the date on which Amtrak submits the grant request. If the Secretary disapproves the request or determines that the request is incomplete or deficient, the Secretary shall include the reason for disapproval or the incomplete items or deficiencies in a notice to Amtrak.

“(2) **15-DAY MODIFICATION PERIOD.**—Not later than 15 days after receiving notification from the Secretary under paragraph (1), Amtrak shall submit a modified request for the Secretary’s review.

“(3) **REVISED REQUESTS.**—Not later than 15 days after receiving a modified request from Amtrak, the Secretary shall either approve the modified request, or, if the Secretary finds that the request is still incomplete or deficient, the Secretary shall identify in writing to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate the remaining deficiencies and recommend a process for resolving the outstanding portions of the request.

“(e) **PAYMENT TO AMTRAK.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), in each fiscal year for which amounts are authorized to be appropriated, amounts appropriated shall be paid to Amtrak as follows:

“(A) 50 percent on October 1.

“(B) 25 percent on January 1.

“(C) 25 percent on April 1.

“(2) **EXCEPTION.**—The Secretary may make a payment to Amtrak of appropriated funds more frequently than once every 90 days if Amtrak, for good cause, requests more frequent payment before a 90-day period ends.

“(f) **AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS AND EARLY APPROPRIATIONS.**—Amounts appropriated to the Secretary for the use of Amtrak shall remain available until expended. Amounts for capital acquisitions and improvements may be appropriated for a fiscal year before the fiscal year in which the amounts will be obligated.

“(g) **LIMITATIONS ON USE.**—Amounts appropriated to the Secretary for the use of Amtrak may not be used to subsidize operating losses of commuter rail passenger or rail freight transportation.

“§24319. Accounts

“(a) **ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCOUNTS.**—Amtrak shall establish—

“(1) a Northeast Corridor Improvement Fund account; and

“(2) a National Network account.

“(b) **NORTHEAST CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT FUND ACCOUNT.**—

“(1) **DEPOSITS.**—Amtrak shall deposit in the Northeast Corridor Improvement Fund account established under subsection (a)(1)—

“(A) grant funds appropriated for the Northeast Corridor Improvement Fund pursuant to section 101(a) of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015 or any subsequent Act;

“(B) compensation received from commuter rail passenger transportation on the Northeast Corridor provided to Amtrak pursuant to section 24905(c); and

“(C) any operating surplus of the Northeast Corridor, as allocated pursuant to section 24317.

“(2) **USE OF NORTHEAST CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT FUND ACCOUNT.**—Except as provided in subsection (d), amounts deposited in the Northeast Corridor Improvement Fund account shall be made available for the use of Amtrak for—

“(A) capital projects described in section 24401(2) (A) or (B) to bring the Northeast Corridor to a state-of-good-repair, including projects described in section 24911(a)(2)(E)(i)(I);

“(B) capital projects intended to increase corridor capacity, improve service reliability, and reduce travel time for rail users on the Northeast Corridor, including projects described in subclauses (II) and (III) of section 24911(a)(2)(E)(i), consistent with the planning process established under section 24911; and

“(C) retirement of principal and payment of interest on loans for capital equipment, or capital leases, attributable to the Northeast Corridor.

“(c) **NATIONAL NETWORK ACCOUNT.**—

“(1) **DEPOSITS.**—Amtrak shall deposit in the account established under subsection (a)(2)—

“(A) grant funds appropriated for the National Network pursuant to section 101(b) of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, or any subsequent Act;

“(B) compensation received from States provided to Amtrak pursuant to section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (42 U.S.C. 24101 note); and

“(C) any operating surplus from the National Network, as allocated pursuant to section 24317.

“(2) **USE OF NATIONAL NETWORK ACCOUNT.**—Except as provided in subsection (d), amounts deposited in the National Network account shall be made available for the use of Amtrak for capital expenses and operating costs of the National Network and retirement of principal and payment of interest on loans for capital equipment, or capital leases, attributable to the National Network.

“(d) **TRANSFER AUTHORITY.**—

“(1) **AUTHORITY.**—Amtrak may transfer any funds appropriated pursuant to the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015 or any other Act, or any surplus generated by operations, between the Northeast Corridor Improvement Fund and National Network accounts upon the expiration of 60 days after Amtrak has notified the Amtrak Board of Directors of such transfer.

“(2) **REPORT.**—Not later than 30 days after the Amtrak Board of Directors receives notification from Amtrak under paragraph (1), the Board shall transmit a report to the Secretary, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, that includes—

“(A) the amount of the transfer; and

“(B) a detailed explanation of the reason for the transfer, including effects on Amtrak services if no transfer were made.

“(e) **LETTERS OF INTENT.**—

“(1) **REQUIREMENT.**—The Secretary shall issue a letter of intent to Amtrak announcing an intention to obligate, for a major capital project described in subclauses (II) and (III) of section 24911(a)(2)(E)(i), an amount from future available budget authority specified in law that is not more than the amount stipulated as the financial participation of the Secretary in the project.

“(2) **NOTICE TO CONGRESS.**—At least 30 days before issuing a letter under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall notify in writing the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, of the proposed letter. The Secretary shall include with the notification a copy of the proposed letter, the criteria used for selecting the project for a grant award, and a description of how the project meets criteria of this section.

“(3) **CONTINGENT NATURE OF OBLIGATION OR COMMITMENT.**—An obligation or administrative commitment may be made only when amounts are appropriated. The letter of intent shall state

that the contingent commitment is not an obligation of the Federal Government, and is subject to the availability of appropriations under Federal law and to Federal laws in force or enacted after the date of the contingent commitment.

“(f) ROLLING STOCK PURCHASES.—Prior to entering into contracts in excess of \$100,000,000 for rolling stock procurements, Amtrak shall submit a business case analysis to the Secretary, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, on the utility of such purchase. This analysis shall—

“(1) include a cost and benefit comparison that describes the total lifecycle costs and the anticipated benefits related to revenue, operational efficiency, reliability, and other factors;

“(2) set forth the total payments by fiscal year;

“(3) identify the specific source and amounts of funding for each payment, including Federal funds, State funds, Amtrak profits, Federal, State, or private loans or loan guarantees, and other funding;

“(4) include whether any payment under the contract will increase Amtrak’s grant request, as required under section 24318, in that particular fiscal year; and

“(5) describe how Amtrak will adjust the procurement if future funding is not available.”.

(2) TABLE OF SECTIONS AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 243 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new items:

“24317. Costs and revenues.

“24318. Grant process.

“24319. Accounts.”.

(b) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR PLANNING.—

(1) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 249 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§24911. Northeast Corridor planning

“(a) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN.—

“(1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, and annually thereafter, the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission established under section 24905 (referred to in this section as the ‘Commission’) shall develop a capital investment plan for the Northeast Corridor main line between Boston, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia, and the Northeast Corridor branch lines connecting to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Springfield, Massachusetts, and Spuyten Duyvil, New York, and facilities and services used to operate and maintain those lines.

“(2) CONTENTS.—Each such plan shall—

“(A) be developed to establish a coordinated approach to capital spending on the Northeast Corridor;

“(B) cover a period of 5 fiscal years, beginning with the first fiscal year after the date of the plan;

“(C) notwithstanding section 24902(b), prioritize projects and investments along the Northeast Corridor based on—

“(i) the anticipated benefits and costs of projects;

“(ii) the anticipated Federal and non-Federal funding available; and

“(iii) the information contained in the Northeast Corridor asset management plans required under subsection (b), once available;

“(D) ensure coordination and optimization across the entire Northeast Corridor and among the various owners and users;

“(E) include a financial plan for the investment period that—

“(i) categorizes each capital project as being primarily associated with—

“(I) normalized capital replacement;

“(II) replacement, rehabilitation, or repair of Northeast Corridor infrastructure assets, including tunnels, bridges, stations, and other assets; or

“(III) improvement of train performance on the Northeast Corridor, including reduced trip times, increased train frequencies, higher operating speeds, and other improvements;

“(ii) identifies the anticipated funding source and financing method for each capital project described in subclauses (II) and (III) of clause (i);

“(iii) describes the anticipated outcomes of each project, including—

“(I) an assessment of the potential effect on passenger accessibility, operations, safety, reliability, and resiliency, and on the ability of infrastructure owners and operators to meet regulatory requirements should the project not be funded; and

“(II) an assessment of the benefits and costs;

“(iv) identifies the extent to which the capital assets are or will be jointly used by intercity passenger rail service and other users, and the proportionate share of that joint usage; and

“(v) for projects that are expected to be fully or partially funded through Federal financial assistance, identifies the most appropriate public agency or entity to receive those funds and implement each capital project.

“(3) ADDITIONAL CONTENTS.—Any plan developed under paragraph (1) after the publication by the Secretary of Transportation of the Northeast Corridor service development plan shall also—

“(A) be developed to identify, prioritize, and phase the implementation of projects necessary to achieve the goals and findings contained in such Northeast Corridor service development plan;

“(B) allow for flexibility to change prioritization and programs based upon the availability of Federal and non-Federal funding;

“(C) inform the Secretary in developing recommendations for Congress on Federal funding needs for the Northeast Corridor and any corresponding Federal investments in the respective capital programs for Northeast Corridor infrastructure owners and users; and

“(D) capture the network-level anticipated outcomes associated with plan implementation, including the anticipated effect on passenger accessibility, operations, safety, reliability, and resiliency.

“(b) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS.—

“(1) CONTENTS.—Amtrak, and States and public transportation entities that own infrastructure that supports or provides for intercity rail passenger transportation on the Northeast Corridor, shall develop and update as necessary Northeast Corridor asset management plans for the Northeast Corridor main line between Boston, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia, and the Northeast Corridor branch lines connecting to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Springfield, Massachusetts, and Spuyten Duyvil, New York, and facilities and services used to operate and maintain those lines, that—

“(A) are consistent with the Federal Transit Administration process, as authorized under section 5326, when implemented; and

“(B) include, at a minimum—

“(i) an inventory of all capital assets owned by the developer of the plan;

“(ii) an assessment of the condition of each of those assets;

“(iii) a description of how the condition of each asset has changed since the previous iteration of the plan; and

“(iv) a description of the necessary resources and processes for bringing or maintaining those assets in a state-of-good repair, including decision support tools and investment prioritization methodologies.

“(2) TRANSMITTAL TO COMMISSION.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of

the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, each entity described in paragraph (1) shall transmit to the Commission a plan developed under paragraph (1). Any updates to such plan shall also be transmitted to the Commission.

“(c) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATES.—The Commission shall, at least once every 10 years, update the Northeast Corridor service development plan.”.

(2) TABLE OF SECTIONS AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 249 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“24911. Northeast Corridor planning.”.

(c) REPEALS.—The following provisions are repealed:

(1) Sections 206 and 211 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, and the items relating thereto in the table of contents of such Act.

(2) Section 24104 of title 49, United States Code, and the item relating thereto in the table of sections for chapter 241 of such title.

SEC. 202. 5-YEAR CAPITAL AND OPERATING PLAN.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 243 of title 49, United States Code, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§24320. 5-Year capital and operating plan

“(a) PLAN.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of an Act appropriating funds pursuant to section 101 of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, or any subsequent authorization of appropriations for the same purposes, the Amtrak Board of Directors shall prepare and transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate a 5-year capital and operating plan for the Northeast Corridor and National Network.

“(b) CONSULTATION.—Each such plan shall be prepared in consultation with—

“(1) the Federal Railroad Administration;

“(2) the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission, with respect to the Northeast Corridor; and

“(3) the requisite States, with respect to the National Network.

“(c) CONTENTS.—A plan prepared under this section shall—

“(1) for each of the Northeast Corridor and the National Network, include—

“(A) projected revenues and expenditures for the Northeast Corridor, State-supported routes, long-distance routes, and corporate development, including Federal and non-Federal funding sources;

“(B) projected ridership levels for the Northeast Corridor, State-supported routes, and long-distance routes;

“(C) projected capital and operational funding requirements necessary to maintain passenger service in order to accommodate predicted ridership levels and predicted sources of Federal and non-Federal funding;

“(D) projected capital and operating requirements, ridership, revenue, and expenditures for new passenger service operations or service expansions;

“(E) an assessment of the continuing financial stability of Amtrak, as indicated by factors including anticipated Federal funding of capital and operating costs, Amtrak’s ability to efficiently recruit, retain, and manage its workforce, and Amtrak’s ability to effectively provide passenger rail service;

“(F) estimates of long-term and short-term debt and associated principal and interest payments (both current and anticipated);

“(G) annual cash flow forecasts;

“(H) a statement describing methods of estimation and significant assumptions;

“(I) specific measures that demonstrate measurable improvement year over year in the financial results of Amtrak’s operations;

“(J) prior fiscal year and projected—
 “(i) operating ratio, cash operating loss, and cash operating loss per passenger on a route, business line, and corporate basis;
 “(ii) specific costs and savings estimates resulting from reform initiatives;
 “(iii) productivity statistics on a route, business line, and corporate basis; and
 “(iv) equipment reliability statistics;
 “(K) capital and operating expenditures for anticipated security needs; and
 “(L) a prioritization of capital expenditures by business line; and
 “(2) reflect the Northeast Corridor planning, as applicable, and grant processes established under sections 24911 and 24318.
 “(d) CONFORMANCE TO AUTHORIZED FUNDING LEVELS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), any financial projection for a fiscal year that is included in a plan prepared under this section shall be based on the amount of dedicated funding for such fiscal year.

“(2) ABSENCE OF APPROPRIATION.—In the absence of an appropriation of funds for such fiscal year, the projection shall be based on the amount of funds authorized by law to be appropriated for that fiscal year, plus other dedicated funding.

“(3) DEDICATED FUNDING DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘dedicated funding’ means any amounts appropriated for a fiscal year and any other funding sources, including revenues and other ancillary funding streams, for the Northeast Corridor or the National Network.

“(e) STANDARDS TO PROMOTE FINANCIAL STABILITY.—In preparing a plan under this section, the Board shall apply sound budgetary practices, including reducing costs and other expenditures, improving productivity, increasing revenues, or combinations of such practices.

“(f) UPDATES.—Amtrak shall provide monthly reports for the current fiscal year in electronic format to the Secretary and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate regarding the items described in subsection (c)(1), which shall include a description of the work completed to date, any differences from projections, and the reasons for such differences.”.

(b) TABLE OF SECTIONS AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for such chapter 243 is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“24320. 5-Year capital and operating plan.”.

(c) REPEAL.—Section 204 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (49 U.S.C. 24101 note), and the item relating thereto in the table of contents of such Act, are repealed.

SEC. 203. STATE-SUPPORTED ROUTES.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 247 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§24712. State-supported routes

“(a) STATE-SUPPORTED ROUTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, the Secretary of Transportation shall establish a State-Supported Route Advisory Committee to promote mutual cooperation and planning pertaining to the rail operations and related activities of trains operated on State-supported routes and to further implement section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (49 U.S.C. 24101 note).

“(2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Committee shall consist of representatives of—

“(A) Amtrak;

“(B) the Department of Transportation, including the Federal Railroad Administration; and

“(C) 7 States that sponsor State-supported routes, selected by the Administrator of the Fed-

eral Railroad Administration on the basis of appropriate expertise and geographic balance, and in a manner that ensures that all appropriate States are represented periodically on the Committee.

“(3) DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERSHIP.—The membership belonging to any of the groups described in each individual subparagraph of paragraph (2) shall not constitute a majority of the Committee’s memberships.

“(4) MEETINGS; RULES AND PROCEDURES.—The Committee shall establish a schedule and location for convening meetings, but shall meet no less than 2 times every fiscal year. The Committee shall develop rules and procedures to govern the Committee’s proceedings.

“(b) COST, SERVICE, AND RIDERSHIP FORECASTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 31, 2016, and annually thereafter, Amtrak shall transmit to each State that sponsors a State-supported route, and to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate—

“(A) a final statement of costs, revenues, ridership, and other information determined appropriate by the Committee established under subsection (a), pertaining to each such route for the prior fiscal year; and

“(B) a cost, service, and ridership forecast for each such route for the upcoming fiscal year, developed pursuant to the methodology established under section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (49 U.S.C. 24101 note).

“(2) EXCEPTION.—The Committee may establish a different deadline than is required under paragraph (1) for submission of final financial statements and cost, service, and ridership forecasts.

“(3) QUARTERLY UPDATES.—Beginning in 2016, and each year thereafter, Amtrak shall transmit to each State that sponsors a State-supported route quarterly updates of the cost, service, and ridership forecast described in paragraph (1)(B) to enable States to pace costs against State budgets, plan effectively, and address unexpected changes in costs in a timely manner, on the following dates:

“(A) April 30, for the period encompassing January through March of such year.

“(B) July 31, for the period encompassing April through June of such year.

“(C) October 31, for the period encompassing July through September of such year.

“(c) INVOICES.—Not later than February 15, 2016, and monthly thereafter, Amtrak shall provide to each State that sponsors a State-supported route a monthly invoice of the cost of operating such route, including fixed costs and third-party costs.

“(d) DISPUTE RESOLUTION.—

“(1) REQUEST FOR EXPEDITED RESOLUTION.—If a dispute arises with respect to a forecast developed under subsection (b), an invoice developed under subsection (c), or the terms of a contract for operation of a State-supported route negotiated between Amtrak and a State that sponsors the route, either Amtrak or the State may request that the Surface Transportation Board conduct expedited dispute resolution under this subsection.

“(2) PROCEDURES.—The Surface Transportation Board shall establish procedures for expedited resolution of disputes brought before it under this subsection.

“(3) BINDING EFFECT.—The decision of the Surface Transportation Board under this subsection shall be binding on the parties to the dispute.

“(e) FRA ASSISTANCE.—The Federal Railroad Administration may provide assistance to the parties in the course of negotiations for a contract for operation of a State-supported route.

“(f) PERFORMANCE METRICS.—In negotiating a contract for operation of a State-supported

route, Amtrak and the State or States that sponsor the route shall consider including provisions that provide penalties and incentives for performance based on metrics that take into account only those factors within the control of Amtrak or the State or States.

“(g) DEFINITION OF STATE.—In this section, the term ‘State’ means each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia.”.

(b) TABLE OF SECTIONS AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for such chapter 247 is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“24712. State-supported routes.”.

SEC. 204. ROUTE AND SERVICE PLANNING DECISIONS.

Section 208 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (49 U.S.C. 24101 note) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 208. METHODOLOGIES FOR AMTRAK ROUTE AND SERVICE PLANNING DECISIONS.

“(a) METHODOLOGY DEVELOPMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, as a condition of receiving a grant under section 101 of such Act, Amtrak shall obtain the services of an independent entity to develop and recommend objective methodologies for Amtrak to use in determining what intercity rail passenger transportation routes and services it should provide, including the establishment of new routes, the elimination of existing routes, and the contraction or expansion of services or frequencies over such routes.

“(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—Amtrak shall require the entity, in developing the methodologies described in subsection (a), to consider—

“(1) the current and expected performance and service quality of intercity rail passenger transportation operations, including cost recovery, on-time performance, ridership, on-board services, stations, facilities, equipment, and other services;

“(2) connectivity of a route with other routes;

“(3) the transportation needs of communities and populations that are not well served by intercity rail passenger transportation service or by other forms of intercity transportation;

“(4) the methodologies of Amtrak and major intercity rail passenger transportation service providers in other countries for determining intercity passenger rail routes and services;

“(5) the views of States, rail carriers that own infrastructure over which Amtrak operates, Amtrak employee representatives, and other interested parties; and

“(6) the funding levels that will be available under authorization levels that have been enacted into law.

“(c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, Amtrak shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate the recommendations developed by the entity pursuant to subsection (a).

“(d) CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 90 days after transmitting the recommendations pursuant to subsection (c), the Amtrak Board of Directors shall consider the adoption of the recommendations and transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing an explanation of any reasons for adopting or not adopting the recommendations.”.

SEC. 205. COMPETITION.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Section 24711 of title 49, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§24711. Alternate passenger rail service pilot program

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, the Federal

Railroad Administration shall complete a rule-making proceeding to develop a pilot program that—

“(1) permits a rail carrier or rail carriers that own infrastructure over which Amtrak operates a passenger rail service route described in subparagraph (B), (C), or (D) of section 24102(7) or in section 24702(a) to petition the Federal Railroad Administration to be considered as a passenger rail service provider over that route in lieu of Amtrak for an operations period of 5 years;

“(2) requires the Federal Railroad Administration to notify Amtrak within 30 days after receiving a petition under paragraph (1) and establish a deadline by which both the petitioner and Amtrak would be required to submit a bid to provide passenger rail service over the route to which the petition relates;

“(3) requires that each bid describe how the bidder would operate the route, what Amtrak passenger equipment would be needed, if any, and what sources of non-Federal funding the bidder would use, including any State subsidy, among other things;

“(4) requires the Federal Railroad Administration to execute a contract within a specified, limited time after the deadline established under paragraph (2) and award to the winning bidder—

“(A) the right and obligation to provide passenger rail service over that route subject to such performance standards as the Federal Railroad Administration may require; and

“(B) an operating subsidy—

“(i) for the first year at a level not in excess of 90 percent of the level in effect for that specific route during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which the petition was received, adjusted for inflation; and

“(ii) for any subsequent years at the level calculated under clause (i), adjusted for inflation; and

“(5) requires that each bid contain a staffing plan describing the number of employees needed to operate the service, the job assignments and requirements, and the terms of work for prospective and current employees of the bidder for the service outlined in the bid, and that such staffing plan be made available by the winning bidder to the public after the bid award.

“(b) ROUTE LIMITATIONS.—The Federal Railroad Administration may not make the program available with respect to more than 2 Amtrak intercity passenger rail routes.

“(c) PERFORMANCE STANDARDS; ACCESS TO FACILITIES; EMPLOYEES.—If the Federal Railroad Administration awards the right and obligation to provide passenger rail service over a route under this section to a rail carrier or rail carriers—

“(1) it shall execute a contract with the rail carrier or rail carriers for rail passenger operations on that route that conditions the operating and subsidy rights on—

“(A) the service provider continuing to provide passenger rail service on the route that is no less frequent, nor over a shorter distance, than Amtrak provided on that route before the award; and

“(B) the service provider's compliance with the standards established under subsection (a)(4)(A), and such additional performance standards as the Administration may establish;

“(2) it shall, if the award is made to a rail carrier other than Amtrak, require Amtrak to provide access to its reservation system, stations, and facilities directly related to operations to any rail carrier or rail carriers awarded a contract under this section, in accordance with subsection (d), necessary to carry out the purposes of this section;

“(3) an employee of any person used by such rail carrier or rail carriers in the operation of a route under this section shall be considered an employee of that carrier or carriers and subject to the applicable Federal laws and regulations governing similar crafts or classes of employees

of Amtrak, including provisions under section 121 of the Amtrak Reform and Accountability Act of 1997 (49 U.S.C. 4312 note) relating to employees that provide food and beverage service; and

“(4) the winning bidder shall provide hiring preference to qualified Amtrak employees displaced by the award of the bid, consistent with the staffing plan submitted by the bidder, and shall be subject to the grant conditions under section 24405 of this title.

“(d) DISPUTES.—If Amtrak and the rail carrier or rail carriers awarded a route under this section cannot agree upon terms to carry out subsection (c)(2), and the Surface Transportation Board finds that access to Amtrak's facilities or equipment, or the provision of services by Amtrak, is necessary to carry out subsection (c)(2) and that the operation of Amtrak's other services will not be impaired thereby, the Surface Transportation Board shall, within 120 days after submission of the dispute, issue an order that the facilities and equipment be made available, and that services be provided, by Amtrak, and shall determine reasonable compensation, liability, and other terms for use of the facilities and equipment and provision of the services.

“(e) CESSATION OF SERVICE.—If a rail carrier or rail carriers awarded a route under this section cease to operate the service or fail to fulfill their obligations under the contract required under subsection (c), the Federal Railroad Administration, in collaboration with the Surface Transportation Board, shall take any necessary action consistent with this title to enforce the contract and ensure the continued provision of service, including the installment of an interim service provider and rebidding the contract to operate the service. The entity providing service shall either be Amtrak or a rail carrier defined in subsection (a)(1).

“(f) ADEQUATE RESOURCES.—Before taking any action allowed under this section, the Secretary shall certify that the Federal Railroad Administration has sufficient resources appropriated under section 101(b) of Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, or any subsequent appropriation, for that purpose that are adequate to undertake the program established under this section.

“(g) BUDGET AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of Transportation may provide to a winning bidder selected under this section appropriations authorized under sections 101(b) of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, or any subsequent appropriation for the same purposes, necessary to cover the operating subsidy described in subsection (a)(4)(B).”

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the conclusion of the pilot program established under the amendment made by subsection (a), the Federal Railroad Administration shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the results on the pilot program established under section 24711 of title 49 United States Code, and any recommendations for further action.

SEC. 206. FOOD AND BEVERAGE REFORM.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 243 of title 49, United States Code, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§24321. Food and beverage reform

“(a) PLAN.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, Amtrak shall develop and begin implementing a plan to eliminate, within 5 years of such date of enactment, the operating loss associated with providing food and beverage service on board Amtrak trains.

“(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In developing and implementing the plan, Amtrak shall consider a combination of cost management and revenue generation initiatives, including—

“(1) scheduling optimization;

“(2) on-board logistics;

“(3) product development and supply chain efficiency;

“(4) training, awards, and accountability;

“(5) technology enhancements and process improvements; and

“(6) ticket revenue allocation.

“(c) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Amtrak shall ensure that no Amtrak employee holding a position as of the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015 is involuntarily separated because of—

“(1) the development and implementation of the plan required under subsection (a); or

“(2) any other action taken by Amtrak to implement this section.

“(d) NO FEDERAL FUNDING FOR OPERATING LOSSES.—Beginning on the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, no Federal funds may be used to cover any operating loss associated with providing food and beverage service on a route operated by Amtrak or an alternative passenger rail service provider that operates a route in lieu of Amtrak pursuant to section 24711.

“(e) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, and annually thereafter for 5 years, Amtrak shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing the plan developed pursuant to subsection (a) and a description of progress in the implementation of the plan.”

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 243 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“24321. Food and beverage reform.”

SEC. 207. RIGHT OF WAY LEVERAGING.

(a) REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, Amtrak shall issue a Request for Proposals seeking private sector persons or entities to utilize Amtrak-owned right-of-way for telecommunications systems, energy distribution systems, and other activities considered appropriate by Amtrak. The Request for Proposals shall provide sufficient information on Amtrak's right-of-way real estate assets to enable respondents to propose an arrangement that will monetize such assets through revenue sharing agreements with Amtrak.

(b) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Amtrak Board of Directors shall review and consider each proposal submitted pursuant to subsection (a). Amtrak may enter into such agreements as are necessary to implement any such proposal or proposals.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, Amtrak shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the Request for Proposals required by this section, including summary information of any proposals submitted to Amtrak and any proposals accepted by the Amtrak Board of Directors.

SEC. 208. STATION DEVELOPMENT.

(a) REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, Amtrak shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on options to enhance development around Amtrak stations, including—

(1) strengthening multimodal connections, including intercity buses;

(2) options for capturing development-related revenue streams; and

(3) other opportunities to better leverage station assets.

(b) PROPOSALS.—

(1) REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, Amtrak shall issue a Request for Proposals seeking persons or entities, where appropriate, to carry out the options identified under subsection (a).

(2) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS.—Not later than 24 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Amtrak Board of Directors shall review and consider each proposal submitted pursuant to paragraph (1). Amtrak may enter into such agreements as are necessary to implement any such proposal or proposals.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30 months after the date of enactment of this Act, Amtrak shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the Request for Proposals required by this section, including summary information of any proposals submitted to Amtrak and any proposals accepted by the Amtrak Board of Directors.

SEC. 209. AMTRAK DEBT.

Section 205 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (49 U.S.C. 24101 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting “, to the extent provided in advance in appropriations Acts” after “Amtrak’s indebtedness”;

(2) by striking “as of the date of enactment of this Act” each place it appears;

(3) in subsection (a), by striking the second sentence;

(4) in subsection (b), by striking “The Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation” and inserting “To the extent amounts are provided in advance in appropriations Acts, the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation”;

(5) in subsection (d), by inserting “, to the extent provided in advance in appropriations Acts” after “as appropriate”;

(6) in subsection (e)(1), by striking “by section 102 of this division”; and

(7) in subsection (e)(2), by striking “by section 102” and inserting “for Amtrak”.

SEC. 210. AMTRAK PILOT PROGRAM FOR PASSENGERS TRANSPORTING DOMESTICATED CATS AND DOGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, Amtrak shall develop a pilot program that allows passengers to transport domesticated cats or dogs on certain trains operated by Amtrak.

(b) PET POLICY.—In developing the pilot program required under subsection (a), Amtrak shall—

(1) in the case of a passenger train that is comprised of more than 1 car, designate, where feasible, at least 1 car in which a ticketed passenger may transport a domesticated cat or dog in the same manner as carry-on baggage if—

(A) the cat or dog is contained in a pet kennel;

(B) the pet kennel is stowed in accordance with Amtrak size requirements for carriage of carry-on baggage;

(C) the passenger is traveling on a train operating on a route described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (D) of section 24102(7) of title 49, United States Code; and

(D) the passenger pays a fee described in paragraph (3);

(2) allow a ticketed passenger to transport a domesticated cat or dog on a train in the same manner as cargo if—

(A) the cat or dog is contained in a pet kennel;

(B) the pet kennel is stowed in accordance with Amtrak requirements for cargo stowage;

(C) the passenger is traveling on a train operating on a route described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (D) of section 24102(7) of title 49, United States Code;

(D) the cargo area is temperature controlled in a manner protective of cat and dog safety and health; and

(E) the passenger pays a fee described in paragraph (3); and

(3) collect fees for each cat or dog transported by a ticketed passenger in an amount that, in the aggregate and at a minimum, covers the full costs of the pilot program.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the pilot program required under subsection (a) is first implemented, Amtrak shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing an evaluation of the pilot program.

(d) LIMITATION ON STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—

(1) SERVICE ANIMALS.—The pilot program required under subsection (a) shall be separate from and in addition to the policy governing Amtrak passengers traveling with service animals. Nothing in this section may be interpreted to limit or waive the rights of passengers to transport service animals.

(2) ADDITIONAL TRAIN CARS.—Nothing in this section may be interpreted to require Amtrak to add additional train cars or modify existing train cars.

(3) FEDERAL FUNDS.—No Federal funds may be used to implement the pilot program required under this section.

SEC. 211. AMTRAK BOARDING PROCEDURES.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Amtrak Office of Inspector General shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that—

(1) evaluates Amtrak’s boarding procedures at its 10 stations through which the most people pass;

(2) compares Amtrak’s boarding procedures to—

(A) commuter railroad boarding procedures at stations shared with Amtrak;

(B) international intercity passenger rail boarding procedures; and

(C) fixed guideway transit boarding procedures; and

(3) makes recommendations, as appropriate, to improve Amtrak’s boarding procedures, including recommendations regarding the queuing of passengers and free-flow of all station-users.

(b) CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 6 months after the release of the report required under subsection (a), the Amtrak Board of Directors shall consider each recommendation provided under subsection (a)(3) for implementation across the Amtrak system.

TITLE III—INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL POLICY

SEC. 301. FEDERAL-STATE PARTNERSHIP FOR NORTHEAST CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 244 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§24407. Federal-State partnership for Northeast Corridor rehabilitation and improvement

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation shall develop and implement a program for issuing grants to applicants, on a competitive basis, for the purpose of financing the capital projects included in the Northeast Corridor Priority Project List developed under subsection (c).

“(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions apply:

“(1) APPLICANT.—The term ‘applicant’ means a State (including the District of Columbia), a group of States, an Interstate Compact, or a public agency established by one or more States and having responsibility for providing intercity passenger or commuter rail service.

“(2) MAJOR STATE-OF-GOOD-REPAIR PROJECT.—The term ‘major state-of-good-repair project’ means a capital project primarily intended to replace, rehabilitate or repair major Northeast Corridor infrastructure assets utilized for providing intercity rail passenger transportation, including tunnels, bridges, stations, and other assets as determined by the Secretary.

“(3) IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.—The term ‘improvement project’ means a capital project primarily intended to improve intercity passenger rail performance on the Northeast Corridor, including reduced trip times, increased train frequencies, higher operating speeds, and other improvements as determined by the Secretary.

“(c) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR PRIORITY PROJECT LIST.—The Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission, established under section 24905, shall develop and approve a Northeast Corridor Priority Project List that shall include—

“(1) a list of prioritized individual major state-of-good-repair projects and improvement projects along the Northeast Corridor that—

“(A) can be completed based on—

“(i) the funding authorized under section 103(b) of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015;

“(ii) any subsequent applicable authorization in effect;

“(iii) in the absence of such an authorization, a 5-year funding amount based on the most recent appropriation; or

“(iv) the requirements of subsection (d); and

“(B) are consistent with the Northeast Corridor capital investment plan required under section 24911(a);

“(2) an identification of the applicant for each individual project;

“(3) an identification of the sources of non-Federal matching funds for each project; and

“(4) a description of the benefits each project will bring to intercity rail passenger services.

“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—The Federal grants authorized under this section shall be for no more than 50 percent of the net project cost of the project involved.

“(e) APPLICABILITY OF CAPITAL GRANT REQUIREMENTS.—Except as specifically provided in this section, the use of any amounts appropriated for grants under this section shall be subject to the requirements of this chapter.

“(f) MATCH REQUIREMENTS.—No grants may be obligated to an applicant under this section unless the applicant has transmitted to the Secretary of Transportation a binding written commitment to provide all amounts necessary for the purpose of matching Federal contributions as required by this section.

“(g) UPDATES TO LIST.—The Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission shall revise the NEC Priority Project List as necessary to reflect—

“(1) any differences in the availability of Federal funding from the levels assumed for purposes of subsection (c)(1)(A) (i) and (ii);

“(2) any elimination or addition of projects; and

“(3) any reduction or increase in benefits to be derived from a project.

“(h) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated for carrying out this section shall remain available until expended.

“(i) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this section shall supplant the requirement of applicants to compensate Amtrak for the use of Amtrak facilities or services pursuant to section 24905(c).

“(j) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term ‘Northeast Corridor’ means the Northeast Corridor main line between Boston, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia, and the Northeast Corridor branch lines connecting to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Springfield, Massachusetts, and Spuyten Duyvil, New York, and facilities and services used to operate and maintain those lines.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 244 of title 49, United States

Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“24407. Federal-State partnership for Northeast Corridor rehabilitation and improvement.”.

SEC. 302. RRIF IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall issue regulations implementing the amendments made by this section.

(b) COLLATERAL.—Section 502(h)(2) of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 (45 U.S.C. 822(h)(2)) is amended—

(1) by striking “(2) The Secretary” and inserting “(2)(A) The Secretary”;

(2) by inserting “The Secretary may subordinate rights of the Secretary under any provision of title 49 or title 23 of the United States Code, to the rights of the Secretary under this section and section 503.” after “from another source.”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(B) The Secretary shall, for purposes of making a finding under subsection (g)(4), accept the net present value on a future stream of State or local subsidy income or dedicated revenue as collateral offered to secure the loan.”.

(c) OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET REVIEW.—Section 502(i) of such Act (45 U.S.C. 822(i)) is amended by inserting “In order to enable compliance with such time limit, the Office of Management and Budget shall take any actions required with respect to the application within such 90-day period.” after “disapprove the application.”.

(d) RRIF APPLICATION.—Section 502(i) of such Act (45 U.S.C. 822(i)) is further amended—

(1) by striking “DISAPPROVAL.—Not later than 90 days after receiving” and inserting “DISAPPROVAL.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after an application is determined pursuant to paragraph (2) to be”;

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(2) COMPLETION OF APPLICATION.—The Secretary shall establish procedures for making a determination, not later than 45 days after submission of an application under this section, whether the application is complete. Such procedures shall—

“(A) provide for a checklist of the required components of a complete application;

“(B) require the Secretary to provide to the applicant a description of the specific components of the application that remain incomplete if an application is determined to be incomplete; and

“(C) permit reapplication without prejudice for applications determined to be incomplete.

“(3) INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ANALYST.—The Secretary shall assign an independent financial analyst within 45 days of submittal of a complete application.”.

(e) POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL.—Section 502(c)(1) of such Act (45 U.S.C. 822(c)(1)) is amended by inserting “, including projects for the installation of a positive train control (as defined in section 20157(i) of title 49, United States Code) system” after “public safety”.

(f) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Section 502 of such Act (45 U.S.C. 822) is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(k) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall transmit to Congress a report on the program under this section that provides information on loans approved and disapproved by the Secretary during the previous year. Such report shall not disclose the identity of direct loan or loan guarantee recipients. The report shall describe—

“(1) the number of pre-application meetings with potential applicants;

“(2) the number of applications received and determined complete under subsection (i)(2), including the requested loan amounts;

“(3) the dates of receipt of applications;

“(4) the dates applications were determined complete under subsection (i)(2);

“(5) the number of applications determined incomplete under subsection (i)(2);

“(6) the final decision dates for both approvals and disapprovals of applications;

“(7) the number of applications withdrawn from consideration; and

“(8) the annual loan portfolio asset quality.”.

SEC. 303. NEC FAST FORWARD.

(a) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR AUTHORITY.—Section 502(d) of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 (45 U.S.C. 822(d)) is amended by inserting “40 percent shall be available solely for projects described in subsection (1)(1), and” after “Of this amount.”.

(b) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR FAST FORWARD PROGRAM.—Section 502 of such Act is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(1) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR FAST FORWARD.—

“(1) PURPOSE.—The Secretary, as part of the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing program, shall provide direct loans and loan guarantees to eligible entities described in subsection (a) for capital projects to improve the Northeast Corridor (as used in section 24911 of title 49, United States Code).

“(2) COLLATERAL.—Loans made or guaranteed under this subsection shall require collateral equal to the loan amount requested.

“(3) INVESTMENT GRADE RATING.—A direct loan or loan guarantee shall be made under this subsection only if a rating agency has assigned an investment grade rating of BBB minus, Baa3, bbb minus, BBB (low), (or equivalent) or higher to the project obligation. For purposes of this paragraph, the term ‘rating agency’ means a credit rating agency registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a nationally recognized statistical rating organization (as that term is defined in section 3(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78c(a))).

“(4) INCLUSION IN NEC PLANNING.—Loans and loan guarantees made under this subsection shall be for projects that are included in the most recent 5-year budget and business plan prepared pursuant to section 24911(a) of title 49, United States Code.

“(5) REFINANCING.—Loans made or guaranteed under this subsection shall not be used for the refinancing of outstanding debt incurred.

“(6) COHORT OF LOANS.—Subsection (f)(4) shall not apply to loans made or guaranteed under this subsection.”.

(c) REPORT ON LEVERAGING RRIF.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report identifying potential revenue sources, projects, and service improvements that could be achieved by the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b).

(d) CONDITIONS OF FUNDING.—

(1) GRANTS.—Section 24405 of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking “15 days” and inserting “30 days” in subsection (a)(4)(B); and

(B) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following:

“(12) Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall transmit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report listing any waiver issued under this section during the preceding year.”.

(2) RRIF.—Section 502(h)(3) of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 (45 U.S.C. 822(h)(3)) is amended—

(A) by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (A);

(B) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(C) the requirements of section 24405(a) of title 49, United States Code.”.

SEC. 304. LARGE CAPITAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.

Section 24402 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following subsection:

“(m) LARGE CAPITAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—For a grant awarded under this chapter for an amount in excess of \$1,000,000,000, the following conditions shall apply:

“(A) The Secretary of Transportation shall not obligate any funding unless the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that it has committed and will be able to fulfill the non-Federal share required for the grant within the applicant’s proposed project completion timetable.

“(B) The Secretary shall not obligate any funding for work activities that occur after the completion of final design unless—

“(i) the applicant transmits to the Secretary a financial plan that generally identifies the sources of the non-Federal funding required for any subsequent segments or phases of the corridor service development program covering the project for which the grant is made;

“(ii) the grant will result in a useable segment, a transportation facility, or equipment, that has operational independence; and

“(iii) the intercity passenger rail benefits anticipated to result from the grant, such as increased speed, improved on-time performance, reduced trip time, increased frequencies, new service, safety improvements, improved accessibility, or other significant enhancements are detailed by the grantee and approved by the Secretary.

“(C) The Secretary shall ensure that the project is maintained to the level of utility that is necessary to support the benefits approved under subparagraph (B)(iii) for a period of 20 years from the date the useable segment, transportation facility, or equipment described in subparagraph (B)(ii) is placed in service. If the project property is not maintained as required by this subparagraph for a period of time in excess of 12 months, then a pro-rata share of the Federal contribution, based upon the percentage remaining of the 20-year period that commenced when the project property was placed in service, shall be refunded.

“(2) EARLY WORK.—The Secretary may allow a grantee subject to this subsection to engage in at-risk work activities subsequent to the conclusion of final design where the Secretary determines that such work activities are reasonable and necessary.”.

SEC. 305. SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION STUDY.

(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Transportation shall conduct a nationwide disparity and availability study on the availability and use of small business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals in publically funded intercity rail passenger transportation (as defined in section 24102 of title 49, United States Code) projects administered by the Federal Railroad Administration.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing the results of the study conducted under subsection (a).

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.—

(A) *IN GENERAL.*—The term “small business concern” means a small business concern as the term is used in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

(B) *EXCLUSIONS.*—The term “small business concern” does not include any concern or group of concerns controlled by the same socially and economically disadvantaged individual or individuals that have average annual gross receipts during the preceding 3 fiscal years in excess of \$22,410,000, as adjusted annually by the Secretary for inflation.

(2) *SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUAL.*—The term “socially and economically disadvantaged individual” has the meaning given the term in section 8(d) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(d)) and relevant subcontracting regulations issued pursuant to that Act, except that women shall be presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged individuals for purposes of this section.

(d) *FUNDING.*—Of the total amount made available to the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration, for each of fiscal years 2016 and 2017, \$3,000,000 shall be used to implement the requirements of this section.

SEC. 306. GULF COAST RAIL SERVICE WORKING GROUP.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal Railroad Administration shall convene a working group to evaluate the restoration of intercity rail passenger service in the Gulf Coast region between New Orleans, Louisiana, and Orlando, Florida.

(b) *MEMBERSHIP.*—The working group shall consist of representatives of—

- (1) Amtrak;
- (2) the States along the proposed route or routes;
- (3) regional transportation planning organizations and metropolitan planning organizations, municipalities, and communities along the proposed route or routes, selected by the Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration;
- (4) the Southern Rail Commission;
- (5) freight railroad carriers whose tracks may be used for such service; and
- (6) other entities determined appropriate by the Administrator.

(c) *RESPONSIBILITIES.*—The working group shall—

- (1) evaluate all options for restoring intercity rail passenger service in the Gulf Coast region, including options outlined in the report transmitted to Congress pursuant to section 226 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-432);
- (2) select a preferred option for restoring such service;

- (3) develop a prioritized inventory of capital projects and other actions required to restore such service and cost estimates for such projects or actions; and
- (4) identify Federal and non-Federal funding sources required to restore such service, including options for entering into public-private partnerships to restore such service.

(d) *REPORT.*—Not later than 9 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the working group shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation in the Senate a report that includes—

- (1) the preferred option selected under subsection (c)(2) and the reasons for selecting such option;
- (2) the information described in subsection (c)(3);
- (3) the funding sources identified under subsection (c)(4);
- (4) the costs and benefits of restoring intercity rail passenger transportation in the region; and
- (5) any other information the working group determines appropriate.

SEC. 307. MISCELLANEOUS.

(a) *TITLE 49 AMENDMENTS.*—Title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 22106(b), by striking “interest thereof” and inserting “interest thereon”;

(2) in section 24101(b), by striking “subsection (d)” and inserting “subsection (c)”;

(3) in section 24706—

(A) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “a discontinuance under section 24704 or or”;

(B) in subsection (a)(2), by striking “section 24704 or”;

(C) in subsection (b), by striking “section 24704 or”.

(b) *TABLE OF SECTIONS AMENDMENT.*—The item relating to section 24316 in the table of sections for chapter 243 of such title is amended by striking “Plan to assist” and inserting “Plans to address needs of”.

(c) *PASSENGER RAIL INVESTMENT AND IMPROVEMENT ACT AMENDMENTS.*—Section 305 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (49 U.S.C. 24101 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting after “equipment manufacturers,” the following: “nonprofit organizations representing employees who perform overhaul and maintenance of passenger railroad equipment.”;

(2) in subsection (c), by striking “, and may establish a corporation, which may be owned or jointly-owned by Amtrak, participating States, or other entities, to perform these functions”;

(3) in subsection (e), by striking “and establishing a jointly-owned corporation to manage that equipment”.

TITLE IV—PROJECT DELIVERY

SEC. 401. PROJECT DELIVERY RULEMAKING.

(a) *RULEMAKING.*—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall begin a rulemaking to govern the Federal review, permitting, and approval or disapproval of—

- (1) freight railroad and intercity rail passenger transportation infrastructure projects, including those that are carried out or planned to be carried out with the use of Federal funds administered by the Department of Transportation through a grant, contract, loan, or other financing instrument; and
- (2) commuter rail passenger transportation (as defined in section 24102(3) of title 49, United States Code) infrastructure projects that are funded in whole or in part through a direct loan or loan guarantee under title V of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 (45 U.S.C. 801 et seq.).

(b) *DEADLINE.*—The Secretary shall complete the rulemaking required under subsection (a) not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) *REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS.*—The rulemaking under subsection (a) shall include procedures that—

- (1) reduce the aggregate time for review and permitting of infrastructure projects described under subsection (a) while preserving existing statutory requirements for public comment or assessing the impact of a proposed project;
- (2) institutionalize or expand best practices or process improvements that agencies are already implementing to improve the efficiency of reviews;

(3) identify high-performance attributes of infrastructure projects described under subsection (a) that demonstrate how projects seek to advance existing statutory and policy objectives, thereby facilitating a more efficient review and permitting process;

(4) create a process to invite Federal agencies and State, local, and tribal governments to participate in the review process, expand coordination with such agencies and governments, and require the identification as early as practicable in the process of any—

(A) Federal agency or State, local, or tribal government with jurisdiction over the project or required by law to conduct or issue a review or make a determination with regard to the project; and

(B) review, analysis, opinion, and permit, license, or approval required for the project;

(5) create process efficiencies, including—

(A) designating Federal agencies and State, local, and tribal governments as cooperating and participating agencies;

(B) conducting concurrent and integrated reviews, analyses, opinions, and permits, licenses, or approvals to the maximum extent practicable;

(C) establishing timelines, in coordination with affected Federal agencies, for completion of those reviews, analyses, opinions, and permits, licenses, or approvals;

(D) developing a coordination plan and schedule, in coordination with affected Federal agencies, for participation in the review by Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal governments, and the public; and

(E) implementing a process to effectively identify and resolve issues that may affect completion of reviews in a timely manner;

(6) effectively engage the public and interested stakeholders as early in the review process as possible;

(7) include opportunities to use existing share-in-cost authorities and other nonappropriated funding sources to support early coordination and project review;

(8) expand the use of information technology tools and identify priority areas for information technology investment to replace paperwork processes, enhance effective project siting decisions, enhance interagency collaboration, and improve the monitoring of project impacts and mitigation commitments;

(9) ensure that documents developed under the procedures are adopted and used by other Federal agencies, and State, local, and tribal governments, to the maximum extent practicable, to eliminate redundancy and duplicative reviews;

(10) include improvements to mitigation policies to provide added predictability, facilitate landscape-scale mitigation based on conservation plans and regional environmental assessments, facilitate interagency mitigation plans where appropriate, ensure accountability and long-term effectiveness of mitigation activities, and utilize innovative mechanisms where appropriate; and

(11) develop a process for periodically considering expansion of categorical exclusions for infrastructure projects described under subsection (a) that conform to those of other modal administrations.

SEC. 402. HISTORIC PRESERVATION OF RAILROADS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with appropriate Federal agencies, including the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and nongovernmental stakeholders representing the railroad industry and historic preservation concerns, shall—

(1) administratively pursue program alternatives (as that term is used in 36 C.F.R. 800.14) to promote a consistent approach in the treatment of railroad and rail-related properties for historic preservation review under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f); and

(2) develop mechanisms for streamlining compliance with the requirements of section 303 of title 49, United States Code, for railroad and rail-related properties.

(b) *CONSIDERATIONS.*—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) consider, among other options, the development of—

(A) programmatic agreements, program comments, exempted categories of undertakings, and guidance for historic reviews under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (as those terms are used in 36 C.F.R. 800.14); and

(B) programmatic evaluations, de minimis impact determinations, and regulatory guidance

for reviews under section 303 of title 49, United States Code (as those terms are used in 23 C.F.R. 774); and

(2) take into account, at a minimum—

(A) maintenance and repair of railroad and rail-related property;

(B) repair and replacement of bridges, structures, or facilities in a like-for-like manner, or when the bridge, structure, or facility is not a contributing element of a historic district;

(C) safety-related projects, including installation, maintenance, and repair of positive train control systems;

(D) management of railroad and rail-related properties that include both historic and non-historic components;

(E) integration of reviews under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, reviews under section 303 of title 49, United States Code, and environmental reviews; and

(F) consistency in treatment of railroads nationwide for historic preservation purposes.

TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS

SEC. 501. DEFINITION.

For purposes of this Act, the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Transportation.

SEC. 502. TITLE 49 DEFINITIONS.

(a) TITLE 49 AMENDMENTS.—Section 24102 of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (5) through (9) as paragraphs (7) through (11), respectively;

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraphs:

“(5) ‘long-distance route’ means a route described in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (7).

“(6) ‘National Network’ includes long-distance routes and State-supported routes.”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(12) ‘state-of-good-repair’ means a condition in which physical assets, both individually and as a system, are—

“(A) performing at a level at least equal to that called for in their as-built or as-modified design specification during any period when the life cycle cost of maintaining the assets is lower than the cost of replacing them; and

“(B) sustained through regular maintenance and replacement programs.

“(13) ‘State-supported route’ means a route described in subparagraph (B) or (D) of paragraph (7), or in section 24702, that is operated by Amtrak, excluding those trains operated by Amtrak on the routes described in paragraph (7)(A).”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 217 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (49 U.S.C. 24702 note) is amended by striking “24102(5)(D)” and inserting “24102(7)(D)”.

The Acting CHAIR. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in House Report 114-36. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. MCNERNEY

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 114-36.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Chairman, I do have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 43, line 24, strike “where appropriate” and insert “including small business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals”.

Page 44, after line 16, insert the following:

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms “small business concern” and “socially and economically disadvantaged individual” have the meanings given such terms in section 305(c).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 134, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Chairman SHUSTER and Ranking Member DEFAZIO for their work on this. It has been a bipartisan effort.

It has been a long time since we have seen a rail bill, and it's about time. We need to do something to improve our rail system. This bill authorizes \$7.2 billion for passenger rail over the next 4 fiscal years and will help improve Amtrak's service and long-term stability. It has a wide range of support from all the stakeholders.

I have two Amtrak stations in my region, and both of them are in communities that are devastated by the economic downturn, and unfortunately, our small businesses have been slower to recover from the recession because they have less access to capital and information.

Section 208 of this bill directs Amtrak to submit a report to Congress within 1 year on the options to enhance economic development around the Amtrak stations. This provision requires Amtrak to issue a request for proposals seeking persons or entities to carry out these proposals.

My amendment encourages the process to be inclusive of socially and economically disadvantaged businesses while keeping the intent to strengthen multimodal connections, capturing development-related streams, meaning multiple revenue sources and better leveraging station assets.

We need to encourage our socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses a chance to provide their input and feedback on station development proposals in and around Amtrak communities.

A disadvantaged business is one that is at least 51 percent owned and controlled by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals or groups. According to the Minority Business Development Agency, only 2 percent of all minority-owned firms are considered high revenue, meaning businesses with annual receipts of over \$1 million. These enterprises account for 68 percent of total receipts and 61 percent of all jobs produced by all minority enterprises.

As these businesses grow and innovate, so does the rest of our economy. Our society and economy is made stronger from diversity, and socially

and economically disadvantaged businesses should have information to compete and to be included in all the business development with public and private entities.

The Department of Transportation has done very well in recognizing the role that disadvantaged small businesses play in the community. We must ensure that this also remains true of Amtrak.

We need to see that these disadvantaged areas develop in sync with the money that is being spent. We just want to make sure that the information is there so they can compete on a fair basis.

My bill and this amendment is a chance to invest in our intercity passenger rail service and spur innovation, growth, and investment in the surrounding communities. I encourage the adoption of my amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I do not oppose the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. HULTGREN). Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, this amendment does clarify that socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses can compete for contracts in the bills dealing with the redevelopment of stations.

A lot of these stations are in downtown areas that are very desirable for development, and so we want to encourage that. This amendment, I believe, strengthens the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Chairman, the good thing about the amendment, it doesn't cost anything, and I think it will really help some of our disadvantaged communities.

As the chairman said, these are in the downtown areas that need the most help, so I encourage my colleagues to support the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. FITZPATRICK.

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 114-36.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 63, line 6, insert after “individuals” the following: “and veteran-owned small businesses”.

Page 64, after line 13, insert the following: (3) VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “veteran-owned small business” has the meaning given the

term "small business concern owned and controlled by veterans" in section 3(q)(3) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(q)(3)).

(B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term "veteran-owned small business" does not include any concern or group of concerns controlled by the same veterans that have average annual gross receipts during the preceding 3 fiscal years in excess of \$22,410,000 as adjusted annually by the Secretary for inflation.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 134, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I thank the Chair, and I commend and congratulate Mr. SHUSTER on his very thoughtful approach to this passenger rail reform bill, which is poised to pass, and I encourage its passage here today.

Mr. Chair, our Nation's veterans are the most highly skilled workforce in our Nation's history. They are the product of rigorous training and iron-clad commitment to teamwork. They have a remarkable ability to succeed where others might fail.

It is no wonder, then, that nearly 2.5 million veterans own and operate their own businesses, creating and sustaining over 8 million jobs for hard-working Americans. However, the current pool of veteran-owned businesses is getting older, with recent census data showing that 75 percent of current veteran-owned businesses were age 55 and over.

As this older generation of veterans look toward retirement, America will begin to lose a key driver of economic growth. We need to be thinking now about how to encourage the next generation of veterans—the more than 250,000 servicemembers currently transitioning from military to civilian life—to take up the job-creating mantle of starting their own veteran-owned businesses.

The numbers are on our side, with one in four veterans saying they are considering starting or buying their own small business. We cannot miss this opportunity.

My amendment under consideration today works to ensure we, as a Congress, are doing everything possible to level the playing field for these veteran entrepreneurs when competing for Federal contracts. It is a simple premise that my constituents in Bucks and Montgomery Counties, Pennsylvania, know and understand as fairness to veterans.

The amendment is straightforward. It adds veteran-owned small businesses to the small business participation study required under section 305 of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act. Section 305 directs the Secretary of Transportation to conduct a nationwide disparity and availability study on the availability and use of certain classes of small businesses.

While I am a supporter of having a completely level playing field throughout Federal contracting for every small

business, the fact is, today, some get a preference when doing business with the Federal Government when veterans do not.

This amendment begins the process of addressing that discrepancy. Fairness to veterans is not about dramatically overhauling the current system, but it is about making sure that if anybody is going to get a preference, veterans should at least have an equal shot.

Adding them to the study included in the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act will give the Department of Transportation a better understanding of the availability of veteran-owned small businesses to help rebuild our crumbling rail infrastructure and hopefully help highlight the benefit of embracing veteran-owned businesses in all future Federal infrastructure projects.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in support of this commonsense amendment, which strengthens the underlying bill and ensures fairness to our veterans.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1330

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, even though I do not oppose the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, I congratulate the author, Mr. FITZPATRICK. It is a great amendment. I wish I had thought of it, to be perfectly honest. I look forward to supporting it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SHUSTER. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

His amendment would ensure that veteran-owned small businesses be considered when they are looking who has historically participated in Federal funds in all projects, so I strongly support the hiring of veterans.

I appreciate Mr. FITZPATRICK for offering this bill, and, once again, it will strengthen the bill, so I support it.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Chair, I thank Mr. CAPUANO and Chairman SHUSTER for their support of this amendment.

Like the previous amendment, there is no cost to including veteran-owned small businesses in the participation study, no cost to the Federal taxpayer, good for our Nation's veterans and their own businesses. I encourage my colleagues to support this.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. MICA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 114-36.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 68, after line 9, insert the following new section:

SEC. 308. NORTHEAST CORRIDOR EXPRESS SERVICE.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Committee, in consultation with Amtrak, shall transmit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that analyzes the implementation of non-stop, high-speed express passenger rail service between Washington, District of Columbia, and New York, New York, and between New York, New York, and Boston, Massachusetts. The report shall consider—

(1) estimated trip time, ridership, revenue, total cost, capacity, and other metrics for each service;

(2) impacts on existing Amtrak and commuter rail services; and

(3) impacts on Northeast Corridor infrastructure.

(b) CONSIDERATION.—Not later than 90 days after the transmittal of the report required under subsection (a), the Amtrak Board of Directors shall consider implementing such services.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 134, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 4 minutes.

Mr. Chairman and my colleagues, first of all, I want to thank both sides of the aisle, particularly the leadership of Chairman SHUSTER, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. DENHAM and others for all working together in a bipartisan effort.

The last rail reauthorization I did with Mr. Oberstar was the first one we had done in about 10 years. That was the precedent to this bill, and we need to do that. We need to act responsibly.

We need to improve passenger rail service in the United States. We need to take Amtrak and this country from a Third World passenger rail service with a Soviet-style operation into the 21st century. I think we can begin to do that with the amendment that I have offered here today and that we have a bipartisan agreement on.

It is not everything I would like. I am going to try to strengthen it as it moves through the process. This amendment would potentially open the Northeast corridor to express service from Washington, D.C., to New York City and to Boston, and it is great to have Mr. CAPUANO here. Right now, the service from Boston to New York City runs 68 miles an hour on average. That is Third World kind of operations.

I believe that we could have express service for less than 2½ hours in that corridor, closer to 2 hours with this amendment. Right now, it goes 83

miles an hour. That is our high-speed service in the United States.

Now, we are about to put a significant amount of money into the Northeast corridor, and I have no problem with that. This bill authorizes that money, some with direct appropriations, about a half billion dollars a year for each of the next 4 years. Then it also allows the revenue coming into the Northeast corridor to stay in the Northeast corridor. I have no problem with that.

Again, what do the rest of us get in the country by putting this money in? I think we have subsidized Amtrak fairly well. Right now, every ticket is underwritten—last year, \$44.98. This will also provide a subsidy. I have no problem.

But what do we get back? Seventy percent of all the air traffic delays in the country are out of the Northeast corridor, the chronically delayed flights. We will see that, too, today and tomorrow.

We can do a much better job improving service. Imagine getting from here to Penn Station in less than 2 hours and from Boston down to Penn Station in record time.

Finally, others have done this. Virgin Trains in England, one of the leaders in innovation, has increased traffic from 14 million in the corridor from London up to the north of England, from 14 million to 28 million passengers in less than half a dozen years, an incredible record that we could replicate here.

We only had 31 million passengers on all of Amtrak last year, a little less than that; and we could double the number of people employed, the number of people working.

I have always supported labor in this. We are not trying to do this at any substandard wages. We want to make certain that all of those commitments to our brothers and sisters in labor are honored.

This is the beginning of a proposal to open this up, the Northeast corridor, and the commission actually will report back to Congress with those proposals. It won't be buried. It is going to come back to us, and then we can move it forward.

It is time to take us into the next era of passenger rail service in this country.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition, even though I do not oppose the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Chairman, I would like to congratulate the gentleman from Florida.

Again, he stands up tall to defend the idea of passenger rail. We totally agree on that concept. We totally agree on trying to make—especially the Northeast corridor—a more efficient rail.

I think this study, this commission might help us. I hope it does. I am

pleased to stand up today and support this amendment and congratulate the gentleman for offering it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER).

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of this amendment. I believe, once again, this study can have positive impact on us.

I also commend the chairman, the former chairman of the committee, for his passion. He is absolutely right as far as getting these trains to run faster, to have less stops. We can create, I believe, in the long term, this express corridor.

He is right that while the Europeans are moving at speeds twice that rate, we can do better in the United States, and I believe this study will help us move in that direction in the future.

I thank the gentleman and support the amendment.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Chairman, in closing, in 2010, when we were in the minority, we had a little more time on our hands. I published this report in the Transportation Committee, "The Federal Government Must Stop Sitting on its Assets," and listed in here is the Northeast corridor. It is one of the greatest assets we have, from here to Boston, and we need to utilize that asset.

We can put in better service, and I think we can do this through this particular amendment. We have got to stop sitting on a valuable asset. It is the only corridor that we own. The other 22,000 miles of rail service is all on freight private rail.

We can and we must adopt this amendment to get us on our way. Thank you, and I hope everybody is on board.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MS. BROWNLEY OF CALIFORNIA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in House Report 114-36.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 503. STATE ACTION PLANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall require—

(1) each State, other than those States identified pursuant to section 202 of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (49 U.S.C. 22501 note), to develop and implement, not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, a State grade crossing action plan; and

(2) each State that was identified pursuant to section 202 of such Act to update its plan and submit to the Secretary, not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this

Act, a report describing what the State did to implement the plan.

(b) CONTENTS.—Each plan required under subsection (a) shall—

(1) identify specific solutions for improving safety at crossings, including highway-rail grade crossing closures or grade separations; and

(2) focus on crossings that have experienced recent grade crossing accidents or multiple accidents, or are at high risk for accidents.

(c) ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide assistance to the States in developing and carrying out, as appropriate, the plan required under subsection (a).

(d) CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may condition the awarding of any grants under section 103 of this Act to a State on the development of such State's grade crossing action plan.

(e) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall make each plan and report publicly available on an official Internet Web site.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 134, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer a simple, commonsense amendment to the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015.

My amendment would require each State to develop a grade crossing action plan, identifying specific solutions for improving safety at rail-highway crossings; furthermore, my amendment would direct States to focus resources on crossings that have experienced recent grade crossing accidents, multiple accidents, or crossings that are at high risk for accidents.

Mr. Chairman, a week ago Tuesday, our Nation witnessed yet another tragic rail accident in my district when Metrolink Ventura County line 102 crashed into a truck along the train tracks in Oxnard.

While there are many unanswered questions about this accident, one issue is abundantly clear. As a nation, we must do more to address rail-highway crossing safety and address the increasing backlog of safety projects nationwide. Currently, California ranks second in the Nation in the number of crossing accidents.

Nationally, the Federal Railroad Administration estimates that there were over 2,000 accidents at railroad crossings in 2013, with 251 fatalities and 929 injuries.

As many residents of Ventura County know, this is not the first time an accident has occurred at the Rice Avenue intersection. This is a heavily-used corridor for both rail goods movement, passenger rail—both Amtrak and Metrolink—as well as automobiles and truck traffic.

Unfortunately, like many local communities across the Nation, Ventura County cannot, on its own, fund rail-highway crossing safety improvements.

As a member of this committee, I am pleased that this bill provides funds for

passenger rail infrastructure, and I strongly support the provision that permits funds to be used for crossing safety improvements because we all know these investments benefit not only safety, but also our regional and national economies.

In 2014, we invested \$220 million in the Railway-Highway Crossings Program at the Federal level; yet, under title 49, only 10 States are required by Federal law to have action plans prioritizing rail-highway safety improvements.

It is critically important for Congress to ensure that Federal dollars for passenger rail infrastructure improvements are used wisely. We must also ensure that Federal funds are prioritized to address safety improvements at the most dangerous crossings first.

My amendment would get at the heart of this issue by requiring every State to have a specific plan in place that will ensure both the wise use of tax dollars and address rail-highway grade crossing safety in a systematic way.

I ask my colleagues to vote for my commonsense amendment.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I claim time in opposition, although I do not oppose the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlewoman from California for offering this amendment.

While grade crossing incidents have dropped 40 percent since 2000, the tragic events in Ms. BROWNLEY's district last week remind us how important it is to be aware of grade crossings.

This amendment requiring States to develop and implement plans to improve safety at grade crossings within their borders, I think, adds strength to the bill. I would also note there are similar grade crossing reporting requirements in the Federal highway program, and we should work with the Senate during conference to reauthorize the surface transportation programs, ensuring that there is consistency among the requirements at those grade crossings.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. I thank the chairman for your extraordinary work on this bill—and a bipartisan bill as well—and I thank you for accepting the amendment.

Rail-highway crossing safety problems are not unique to my district. Sadly, my colleagues have also experienced recent tragedies. On Monday, a Long Island Rail Road train struck a car stopped on the tracks in East Rockaway. In February, a Metro-North train struck a sport utility vehicle, tragically killing the driver and five train passengers in Valhalla.

I strongly believe that Congress, along with State and local governments, must address this safety issue as a matter of urgency, and I urge my colleagues to support my amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POSEY. I thank the gentlelady for yielding. I would like to speak in support of her amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Does the gentlewoman ask unanimous consent to reclaim her time?

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Yes.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentlewoman is recognized.

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. Does the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Yes, I yield.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Florida is recognized.

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

I would like to support this amendment and urge my colleagues to do so.

They are putting in a high-speed rail in my State now, running over 100 miles through my district, something that will go 120-plus miles an hour through the middle of small towns and communities which are ill-prepared and ill-equipped to safely facilitate that high rate of traffic.

I wish I had thought ahead to bring some illustrations, photographs, or diagrams of some of the intersections that this train will go blazing through without much thought to the pedestrians, the vehicles, the men, women, and children in the community that will be put in danger by it.

I think this is a great amendment. If you are going to use Federal money—I see that the gentlelady said it is for projects that use Federal money, not an unfunded mandate—but if you are going to use the Federal money, you are going to use these RIF loans, some of which appear to be in the process of being granted in direct conflict of the requirements of granting the RIF loans, the very least we could do is insist that the money is used safely in our districts.

□ 1345

The very least we could do is insist that the money is used safely in our districts.

So I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and I urge my colleagues to support this great amendment.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced

that the Senate has passed a joint resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S.J. Res. 8. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

PASSENGER RAIL REFORM AND INVESTMENT ACT OF 2015

The Committee resumed its sitting.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. PERLMUTTER

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. HULTGREN). It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in House Report 114-36.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 503. QUIET ZONE REPORT.

Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall transmit to Congress a report evaluating the rule issued by the Federal Railroad Administration on the use of locomotive horn at rail crossings. Such report shall—

- (1) evaluate the effectiveness of the rule in reducing accidents and fatalities at rail crossings;
- (2) evaluate the effectiveness of the rule in establishing quiet zones;
- (3) identify any barriers to the establishment of quiet zones; and
- (4) estimate the costs associated with their establishment.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 134, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Chairman, my amendment to H.R. 749 requires the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, to conduct a study and submit a report to Congress evaluating the effectiveness of the Federal Railroad Administration's 2005 rule on the use of locomotive horns at rail crossings. We were just talking about rail crossings.

After 10 years of being in effect, I believe it is fair we ask the FRA to update and modernize the train horn regulation, allowing flexibility for new technologies and innovations that may become available.

The basic premise behind the rule has not changed: to promote public safety by requiring train operators to sound horns at certain decibel levels while passing through railway crossings to alert motorists and pedestrians.

While the rule currently allows municipalities to apply for "quiet zone" status, I am concerned the current requirements for obtaining a quiet zone