

April 27, 2017

Hon. Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee and
Representative, 11th District of New Jersey
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3011

Re: NEC Investment

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen:

As you know, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act authorized \$1 billion for the Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair grant program. The purpose of the grant is to reduce the state of good repair backlog on publically-owned or Amtrak-owned infrastructure, equipment, and facilities.

As Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, respectfully, I ask you to consider directing \$500 million in funding, from the Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair grant program, toward the Northeast Corridor in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill.

The importance of the corridor to New Jersey residents and businesses cannot be overstated. Further, it is a vital artery, without which major sectors of American commerce and the economy would soon cease to function.

Last year, several large companies and business organizations formed the Coalition for the Northeast Corridor (CNEC). The New Jersey League of Municipalities has joined this group. As Mayor of my municipality, and for the sake of our residents and businesses, I welcome their efforts.

The purpose of the coalition is to focus attention on the critical investment and infrastructure needs of the Northeast Corridor. I understand that the coalition has had productive meetings with your staff. I, sincerely, appreciate your ongoing commitment to the corridor and those who depend upon it.

As you know, the Northeast Corridor (NEC) is the most important rail corridor in the country. It traverses eight states and Washington, D.C., connecting the

largest cities and economic hubs on the East Coast. The Northeast Corridor Commission estimates that the NEC carries 750,000 individual trips every day, making up nearly half of all passenger rail trips nationwide. NEC passengers use the corridor to travel between work and home, home and school, to visit family and friends, to conduct business meetings and conferences. Few highways or airports in the U.S. are comparable – and there is no rail corridor in the country that comes close to serving as many passengers and businesses as the NEC.

The users of the Northeast Corridor represent a broad spectrum of transportation and business community stakeholders whose employees, clients and customers rely on the corridor to conduct commerce, create jobs, and drive the U.S. economy forward.

The NEC is currently in a state of disrepair. Significant work has been done by both the NEC Commission, as well as the FRA's NEC Future project, to identify the most critical projects facing the corridor in the near term. We are supportive of this work, as we believe it is critical that there is agreement across the group of interested stakeholders that the most critical state of good repair projects should be prioritized. Major bridges and tunnels along the corridor are many years beyond their useful life, and risk failure at any time.

The Northeast Corridor Commission estimates the state of good repair backlog on the corridor to be in excess of \$50 billion. According to both *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, as well as operators such as Amtrak and New Jersey Transit, the corridor's rail infrastructure will fail without major investment. A sustained infrastructure failure of this magnitude portends serious challenges for transportation infrastructure not only in the Northeast, but throughout the United States. According to the Northeast Corridor Commission, "the loss of the NEC for a single day could cost the country \$100 million in added congestion, productivity losses, and other transportation impacts."

As our State is the most densely populated state in the Nation, so our roads are the most heavily used. Any sustained shift of traffic from rail to road would result in increased commuting times, increased accidents, increased wear and tear on our roads and bridges and significantly decreased economic activity. Of even greater concern, it would also lead to increased response times for our public safety first responders, in the event of emergency.

The employees and leadership in many companies, academic institutions, health systems, and municipalities are deeply concerned about the state of

disrepair of the NEC, and want to work with you, as well as the Administration, to address this critical economic, security and safety issue. We have been heartened to hear President Trump and Secretary Chao continue to advocate for significant infrastructure investment. We appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to working with you to revitalize the Northeast Corridor.

Thank you for your consideration and for all that you do for the people – and the municipalities – of your District, of our State and of our Nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael J. Darcy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Michael J. Darcy, CAE
Executive Director

Posted: 04/27/2017