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September 28, 2015

The Honorable Leslie Richards
Secretary of Transportation
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
400 North St., 6th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Secretary Richards:

As an advocate for expanded and improved public transportation throughout south central Pennsylvania, the Modern Transit Partnership as long been a supporter of additional passenger rail service. We believe our efforts have borne fruit with the increase in number of trips along Amtrak's Keystone Corridor connecting Harrisburg with Lancaster and Philadelphia. We would like to see that service expanded west of Harrisburg, providing additional passenger rail service connecting Harrisburg with Pittsburgh – and points in between.

As the State Rail Plan becomes finalized, now is the optimal time to include increased passenger rail service to the vision for the state, both short-term as well as long-term. There has already been significant analysis done by the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, the Pittsburgh Community Revitalization Group and the Western Pennsylvanians for Passenger Rail. Their 2014 study "On Track to Accessibility" offers compelling evidence that increasing service to three daily round trips between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh would be eminently feasible.

The potential for improved connections along this corridor – for the myriad of students attending a variety of colleges and universities, patients and consumers seeking healthcare services from the many providers and the business communities working toward enhanced economic development – stands to provide the Commonwealth with a wealth of opportunities.

Partnerships with Amtrak and Norfolk Southern also will be key to improving this service; if Virginia Railway Express can add significant service in two years or less, Pennsylvania should be able to as well. The Modern Transit Partnership stands ready to support the Department in the decision to improve and increase rail service in this corridor.

Respectfully,



Bradley R. Jones
Chairman
Modern Transit Partnership

234 Strawberry Square
Harrisburg
Pennsylvania
17101
717-221-1642
www.mtptransit.org