



January 2, 2014

Secretary Barry Schoch, P.E.
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
400 North Street, 6th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Passenger Rail Service for Western Pennsylvania

Dear Secretary Schoch,

On behalf of the Greater Pittsburgh Hotel Association (GPHA), we write to you today to request additional service of the Pennsylvanian from Amtrak. Currently, there is only one passenger rail train travelling each direction daily between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. Increasing service to three trains a day in each direction would be economically beneficial for Allegheny County's urban core and the Commonwealth, as well as beneficial to Pittsburgh's hospitality community.

The hospitality community of Pittsburgh prides itself on amazing attention to service that we offer the guests in our city. We also have the ability to offer any type of guest room from a luxury brand hotel to a Bed and Breakfast. But our residents AND guests have fewer transportation options within a 500 mile radius than they have in the past 40 years. Travel by automobile remains one of the only options available to many of Pittsburgh's residents and visitors, and this is simply not feasible for so many who travel. 40 years ago, there were 8 passenger rail trips a day between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh and today there is only one.

The Greater Pittsburgh Hotel Association represents over 80 hotels in the surrounding area. We speak on behalf of all of them when we say we believe that passenger rail provides a financially accessible and environmentally friendly transportation option. An increase in Amtrak service in Pittsburgh will expand transportation access to a broader range of citizens and will encourage people to visit the world class attractions found in Allegheny County's urban core. This investment will provide huge benefit to the region with more people visiting and exploring our City.

The report, *On Track to Accessibility*, conservatively estimates that adding two trains will increase annual ridership by 195,000 people, a return well worth the investment. We stand united and ask you to take the first step and request additional service from Amtrak for the Pennsylvanian. We thank you for your attention and consideration on this important transportation issue for the hospitality community of Allegheny County. Please contact us if you have any questions or comments about this issue.

Sincerely,

Tim Zuger
President, Greater Pittsburgh Hotel Association