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NEW JERSEY

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 27, 2006

Mr. David Laney
Chairman of the Board
National Railroad Passenger Corporation
60 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairman Laney:

I am writing about Amtrak's new winter timetable, which specifies that Acela trip times between Washington, DC, and New York, NY, will be shortened by five minutes. While I am pleased with this result of capital improvement projects along the Northeast Corridor (NEC), I am interested in further efforts to reduce this city-pair trip time to two-and-a-half hours, or even two-and-a-quarter hours. Please let me know which capital improvements are needed to reach these goals. In addition, I would like to know how soon they could be accomplished and at what cost.

As you may know, for years I have been interested in upgrading infrastructure along the NEC to ensure faster, more reliable train service. In New Jersey, nearly three-and-a-half million Amtrak passengers each year use the NEC, and more than 100,000 a day use rail transit services operating on the NEC. As a frequent NEC passenger and one of Amtrak's most active supporters in the Congress, I know the importance of these capital improvements both to New Jerseyans and the entire region, and I look forward to continued progress on NEC projects. In fact, I have co-authored legislation with Senator Trent Lott which will, among other things, authorize federal funding needed to fully bring the NEC to a state-of-good repair. I am hopeful that the Congress will take up and pass this legislation soon.

Lastly, I am concerned about recent fare increases on tickets for Northeast Corridor (NEC) 'Regional' train passengers, long-distance train passengers, and NEC monthly pass-holders. If these passengers must pay seven percent—or \$1 to \$3 per ticket—more per trip, what more can they expect for their money? That is a question Amtrak has not yet answered—and it must. With so many passengers affected in the northeast, NEC customers are right to expect improvements in service.

Sincerely,

