



Bruno Maestri

Vice President, Government Affairs and Corporate Communications

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress
2369 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sean P. Maloney
Member of Congress
2331 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Antonio R. Delgado
Member of Congress
1007 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Tonko, Representative Maloney, and Representative Delgado:

Thank you for your letter to Mr. Anderson of March 6, received March 11, requesting that Amtrak hold off on submission of its Coastal Consistency Determination application to the New York Department of State, and that Amtrak work collaboratively with the appropriate municipal, county, and state officials, and relevant stakeholders. I am responding on Mr. Anderson's behalf. The proposed project, which is being managed by Amtrak in partnership with the New York State Department of Transportation, is for the installation and/or upgrades of railroad right-of-way fencing and gates along the Empire Corridor.

In December 2012 Amtrak signed a long-term lease with the CSX Corporation, the owner of the railroad property, who historically had been responsible for the 94-mile Hudson Line between Schenectady and Poughkeepsie. Under this agreement, Amtrak became responsible for the maintenance, dispatching, and liability of the line. This agreement gave passenger trains priority over freight trains and paved the way for significant service and safety improvement projects to bring the line up to a state of good repair on one of the busiest rail corridors in the country. Twenty-six passenger trains a day travel over the Hudson Line, operating at speeds up to 110 miles per hour. Through the Hudson Valley Region on the southern end of the line the trains operate at speeds up to 90 miles per hour. Since Amtrak has taken control of the line, working with both our Federal and State partners, more than \$200 million in rail improvements have been completed enhancing Amtrak Empire Service from New York City to Niagara Falls. Some of the significant projects include the installation of 17 miles of track between Schenectady and Albany, a years-long goal within the State of New York; the addition of a fourth station track at the Albany-Rensselaer Station; 14 grade crossing upgrades and improvements along the southern region of the Hudson line; and major improvements to the signal system along the lines which replaced more than 60 miles of obsolete above-ground, 30 year-old wires with new underground power cable and electronic track circuits.



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Amtrak has also installed approximately 120,000 new ties and over 94,000 linear feet of new rail between Albany/Rensselaer and Poughkeepsie. Last year a \$33 million project to install Positive Train Control (PTC) on the Hudson Line was completed, further enhancing safety along the route.

Railroad tracks, trestles, yards, and rights-of-way are private property and trespassing on railroad property is specifically prohibited by law. Along the Hudson line right-of-way areas that are closed to the public were not clearly delineated or restricted, thus allowing trespassing to go unabated and creating a major safety risk to the public and the operation of Amtrak trains. The lack of fencing and gates has allowed pedestrians and vehicles to purposely and inadvertently access private railroad property, thereby creating such risks. Trains cannot stop quickly to avoid people and vehicles on or near the tracks. When a train applies braking in an emergency, it risks derailing and this risk is exacerbated if striking an object on the tracks. Trains operating along this route regularly carry up to and over 300 passengers onboard. The project is not proposing to close or restrict access to any current public access areas along the route.

Amtrak has been working collaboratively with both NYSDOT and NYSDOS, along with other official stakeholders. Amtrak and NYSDOT staff met with elected officials in April 2018, including then-Representative Faso, Town Supervisors and Mayors, and members of the State Assembly and Senate. In August 2018, Amtrak and NYSDOT staff held on site meetings with Town Officials and Emergency responders, along with staff from Scenic Hudson, to help coordinate the proposed plan. In July 2019, Amtrak project staff met with Town Officials and staff from Scenic Hudson to further coordinate the proposal. A meeting was held in August 2019 that included NYSDOT and NYSDOS staff, Town elected officials, members of the New York State Assembly and Senate, and staff from Scenic Hudson. In October 2019, Amtrak Project Staff held a follow-up meeting with the Town of Stuyvesant officials and Emergency responders. As a result of these meetings, Amtrak has adjusted some of the components of the plan including fencing heights and locations in several of the locations. Amtrak submitted an initial plan to NYSDOS in January 2018 that included only the one-year proposed plan for the southern portion of the Hudson Line.

After much discussion with the stakeholders, NYSDOT, and NYSDOS, Amtrak withdrew that application and was asked by NYSDOS to submit one entire application that would cover the full project proposal over the five-year period. As a result, Amtrak and NYSDOT are currently reformulating the plan and restructuring the scheduling of the components of those plans. Once that full plan is formulated, we will meet with the Towns and then submit the Coastal Consistency Determination application to NYSDOS.



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At Amtrak, safety is of utmost importance. The implementation of this proposed project would enhance the safety of our customers, our employees, and the public. Again, the proposal would not close or restrict access to any public access areas. Its purpose is to protect the lives of those people both on the train and those accessing public areas near the railroad.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bruno Maestri".

Bruno Maestri
Vice President, Government Affairs and Corporate Communications

cc: Richard Anderson