Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 28, 2011

Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Tom Latham
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, and Urban Development.
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable John Olver
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the drastic cuts to Amtrak's FY2012 passenger rail program proposed by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development.

The FY2012 Transportation-HUD House Appropriations Subcommittee budget proposal prohibits the use of federal funds provided to Amtrak to fund any operating costs of state-supported trains. If enacted by the full Congress, it will eliminate nearly 150 weekday state-supported trains and negatively impact the more than fifteen million passengers who ride those trains each year and the communities they live in.

State-supported trains are among Amtrak's most successful and fastest-growing routes, representing nearly half of its 30 million riders and nearly a quarter of its revenue. Many states recognize the benefits of investing in passenger rail, and have spent substantial state funds to improve services with positive ridership results.

After the Northeast Corridor, the next three busiest routes are state-supported routes in California and Pennsylvania. Amtrak's fastest growing routes are on the state-supported services in North Carolina, Virginia and Michigan. These cuts would decimate their service.

Moreover, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (P.L. 110-432), required that Amtrak and the states work together to develop a cost-sharing methodology for short-distance corridors, which should be implemented by October 2013. This process is on-going and agreement is nearing completion. Representatives from a number of states and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) have participated in the development of this collaborative methodology.

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In addition, the overall funding amount for Amtrak represents a draconian cut to an essential mode of transportation at a time when the nation is investing unprecedented capital in high-speed and intercity passenger rail to create jobs, improve trip times, and increase frequencies.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Amtrak service is beneficial to our country's economic prosperity, competitiveness, environmental sustainability and national security and deserves Congressional support.

Sincerely,

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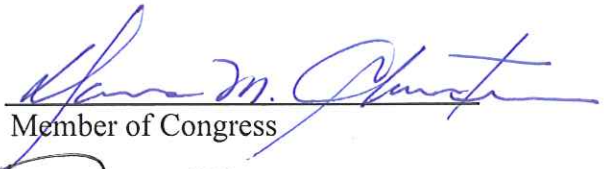

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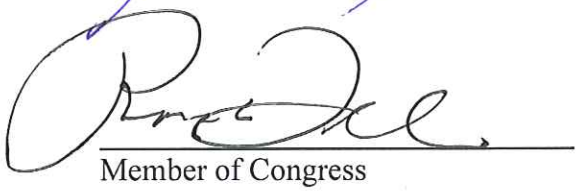

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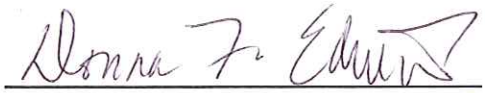

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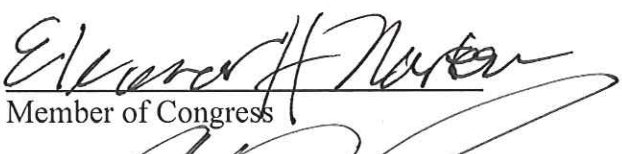

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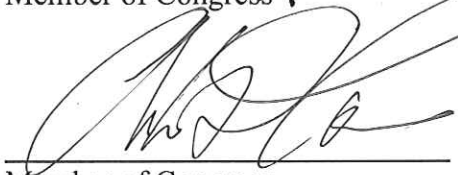

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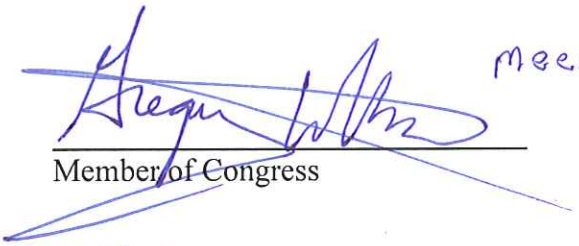

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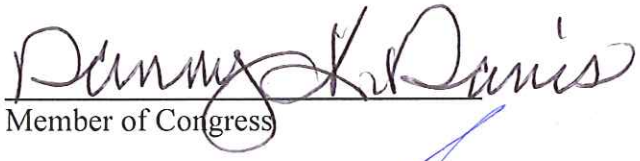

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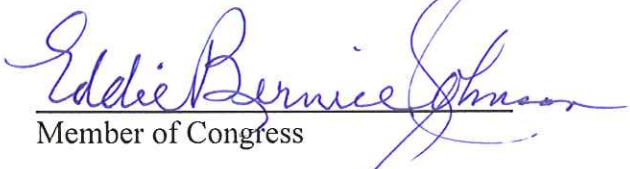

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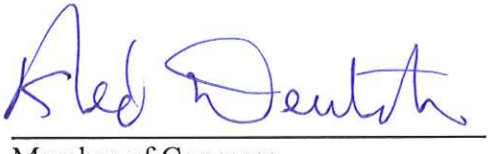

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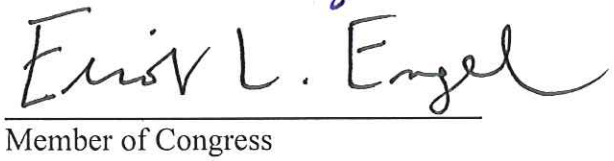

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