

January 23, 2015

The Honorable Leslie Richards
Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Keystone Building
400 North Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Secretary Richards,

Congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of Transportation. AARP Pennsylvania looks forward to working with you on transportation issues of interest to our 1.8 million members in the Commonwealth. One of these issues has been highlighted in a recent report we wish to bring to your attention.

AARP has a strong interest in ensuring all Pennsylvanians have access to various forms of transportation services. This is a particular need for many older Pennsylvanians who may have reduced their use of automobiles due to physical limitations. In addition, the loss of scheduled intercity transportation for rural residents is a significant concern in Pennsylvania, which has a high proportion of rural residents.

Passenger rail is a mobility option for midlife and older people who travel both within congested regional corridors and between cities separated by longer distances. A 2009 National Household Travel Survey found that adults age 65 and older took almost five million trips on Amtrak. AARP's public policy recommends that States should establish dependable funding mechanisms for investment in passenger rail, and support passenger rail systems that are integrated and coordinated with the nationwide passenger rail system.

AARP shares the belief that increasing the frequency of service on the Amtrak *Pennsylvanian* route would provide Pennsylvania residents with a needed form of intercity transportation and would be an economic boost for Central and Western Pennsylvania. The recent report issued by the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and Western Pennsylvanians for Passenger Rail, *On the Track to Accessibility*, shows how the benefits of increased rail service on the *Pennsylvanian* route could be achieved for little costs.

AARP urges the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to carefully consider the recommendations of the *On the Track to Accessibility* report and support an increase in service on the Amtrak *Pennsylvanian* route between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh.

Sincerely,



Ray Landis
Advocacy Manager
AARP Pennsylvania

Cc: Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership