

Washington, D.C. — The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee today approved legislation reaffirming the federal government's commitment to Amtrak, the nation's intercity passenger rail system. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), a member of the Committee, supported the legislation which would authorize \$2 billion annually for Amtrak over the next three years. Blumenauer opposed an earlier proposal by the administration to decrease federal funding for Amtrak and leave the future of the system primarily up to individual states.

“Earlier this year, Amtrak faced an uncertain future with the potential for Congress taking one of two tracks on this issue,” Blumenauer said. “I’m pleased that today our Committee chose the right track by reaffirming its commitment to the nation’s passenger rail system.

“Amtrak gives a necessary balance to our transportation system, choice to our traveling public, and relief to congested highways and airports,” Blumenauer continued. “I do not want to see one mile of passenger rail service lost in this country. I want to see a stronger federal commitment to intercity passenger rail. This bill is a positive step in that direction”

In a related development, Amtrak President David Gunn will be meeting with the Oregon Congressional Delegation on Thursday to discuss Amtrak's future in Oregon. Gunn is meeting with the delegation at the request of Blumenauer and Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) who is also on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. The delegation will be advocating for a greater commitment from Amtrak to service for Oregonians. The meeting will be held in 2134 Rayburn on Thursday, June 26th at 2:30 p.m.

Amtrak's Cascades service, which operates in the Pacific Northwest Corridor between Eugene, Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, British Columbia, is experiencing some of the fastest ridership growth rates in the country. In the Pacific Northwest, public opinion strongly supports having the federal government step up to the plate to provide Amtrak with much-needed funding so that service is not reduced on the West Coast because of the states' economic crisis.

The Amtrak Reauthorization bill must now be approved by the full House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate and signed in to law by the President.