

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
INTELLIGENCE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

April 5, 2018

Richard Anderson
President and Chief Executive Officer
Amtrak
1 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Anderson,

As I mentioned in our call earlier this week, I have grave concerns about Amtrak's recent announcement that it would stop accepting private and charter trains. This decision would have a destructive effect on West Virginia's economy and could potentially force local businesses to close their doors. It will have a particularly devastating impact on the Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society, a non-profit that has worked to showcase the important cultural impact of the railroad in southern West Virginia for over 59 years. Even though Collis P. Huntington pays Amtrak handsomely for its services and is careful to minimize its impact on Amtrak's arrival times, it received no prior notice of the change in policy.

This change affects not only organizations like Collis P. Huntington but cities like Hinton, Huntington, and Beckley that rely on its services for tourism and local business. Collis P. Huntington operates the annual New River Train during the Railroad Days Festival, a time-honored tradition that is one of the largest tourism events in the area, showcasing the beauty and hospitality of southern West Virginia to thousands of visitors and bringing in approximately \$5 million to the local economy. This is important to the whole community, as critical local non-profits like Kiwanis and Lions Club receive nearly half of their yearly budgets through fundraising activities during the Festival.

During our previous conversation, I was encouraged to hear that Amtrak plans to allow some operators to apply for an exception and would review these challenges on a case-by-case basis. Given the importance of this service to West Virginia's economy and our culture, I urge you to clarify the details of this appeals process as soon as possible so that individuals, companies, and other organizations like Collis P. Huntington are not left in limbo any longer. I also ask that you ensure these affected entities are given the time and information they need to navigate this new process. This is an unexpected change in policy that impacts their bottom lines. We should do our best to ensure it's not an expensive one as well.

I thank you kindly for your time and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator