



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

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September 8, 2020

Mr. William J. Flynn
President and Chief Executive Officer
Amtrak
1 Massachusetts Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Flynn:

We write to express our outrage over Amtrak's decision to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for eCommerce and Mobile Development that would allow certain work to be offshored.¹ This RFP comes at a time when Amtrak is planning to reduce its workforce by 14 percent and seeking additional taxpayer funding to maintain limited service during the COVID-19 pandemic. In your role as President of Amtrak, we urge you to prioritize American workers and prohibit any Amtrak jobs from being offshored.

Amtrak provides a critical passenger rail service, connecting rural and urban communities alike throughout the nation. While Amtrak's employees have always been vital to the company's success, recent months have shown just how essential these workers are to keeping our country moving forward. Amtrak is funded in large part by taxpayer dollars and therefore has the duty to support the American workforce while providing excellent passenger rail service.

As you know, Amtrak's Fiscal Year 2021 grant request seeks \$2.34 billion.² In light of COVID-19, the company returned to Congress to request \$1.475 billion in supplemental funding.³ Amtrak further revised this supplemental request to a total of \$4.88 billion. Recently, Amtrak announced the decision to lay off approximately 2,050 Amtrak employees by October 1, 2020, contributing to the current national unemployment rate of 8.4 percent.⁴ While the global health crisis has plunged every transportation sector into a state of uncertainty, there is no doubt that Amtrak,

¹ "eCommerce and Mobile Development FY21." Amtrak Work Request 159. Released July 24, 2020.

² "General and Legislative Annual Report & Fiscal Year 2021 Grant Request." *Amtrak*. February 15, 2020.

<https://www.amtrak.com/content/dam/projects/dotcom/english/public/documents/corporate/reports/Amtrak-General-Legislative-Annual-Report-FY2021-Grant-Request.pdf>.

³ "Amtrak Supplemental FY2021 Funding Letter to Congress." *Amtrak*. May 25, 2020. <https://media.amtrak.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Amtrak-Supplemental-FY21-Funding-Letter-to-Congress-Final-Signed-5.25.20.pdf>.

⁴ "The Employment Situation." *Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor*. September 4, 2020. USDL-20-1650.

which promotes itself as America's Railroad, should be staffed by America's workforce.⁵ Instead, at the height of a pandemic-caused recession, Amtrak is choosing to look the other way and allow its contractors to ship high-wage, high-tech American jobs overseas. Such actions are unacceptable.

However, this is not the first time that Amtrak has tried to offshore jobs. In 2006, Amtrak announced that it would be contracting out national reservation system work to private vendors, including those overseas. Our Senate colleagues wrote to the former Chairman of Amtrak's Board of Directors to protest the outsourcing plan, and Amtrak shortly reversed its policy.⁶ At that time Congress clearly stated that such practices are plainly wrong. Fourteen years later, our stance has not changed.

If Amtrak does not reverse the offshoring provision in this and any existing or future RFP, we will find it difficult to support additional taxpayer dollars for Amtrak. This may seem draconian given the need, but how can Congress justify spending taxpayer dollars to ship good-paying jobs overseas? We insist that your RFPs reflect the congressional intent that American taxpayer dollars support American jobs.

Sincerely,



PETER A. DeFAZIO
Chair
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure



DANIEL W. LIPINSKI
Chair
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines,
and Hazardous Materials



JENNIFER WEXTON
Member of Congress

⁵ "Today and Tomorrow." *Amtrak – A History of America's Railroad*. Accessed August 24, 2020.
<https://history.amtrak.com/amtraks-history/amtrak-today>.

⁶ "Byrd, Murray Oppose Effort to Outsource Amtrak Jobs Overseas." Office of Senator Patty Murray. July 6, 2006.
<https://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/newsreleases?ID=E24875B7-345E-41BE-BF9F-882545B95FC2>.