

**Testimony of Mr. Tony Coscia**  
**Nominee to the Amtrak Board of Directors**  
**United States Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee**  
**Hearing on Nominations, September 7, 2022**

Good morning, Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and members of the Committee.

I am Tony Coscia, the Chairman of the Amtrak Board of Directors and board member since 2010. Thank you for holding this nomination hearing today.

It is an honor to serve on Amtrak's Board and work with such a dedicated team, both within the Company and among our various stakeholders. I am grateful for the extraordinary level of support that passenger rail and Amtrak receive from this Committee and Congress.

At my first confirmation hearing in 2010, Amtrak was still recovering from the darkest period in its history. A near bankruptcy in the early 2000s eroded confidence in the company and its management. Some questioned whether Amtrak and its national network should continue to exist. There were limited plans for Amtrak's future direction or any assurance it would receive sufficient funding to maintain existing assets, let alone improve and expand service.

I am proud to say that since that time, Amtrak, working with our partners, made significant progress:

- We grew ridership nationwide while significantly improving the finances of the company, despite decades of chronic underinvestment that left Amtrak saddled with old and inefficient assets and infrastructure. By the end of FY2019, Amtrak eliminated over \$300 million in annual operating losses compared to 2013 and, more importantly, created a pathway to investing revenue in to long-overdue capital projects;
- We recruited new industry-leading management to the Company to implement best practices in safety, operations, financial management and customer service;
- We completed the nationwide installation of Positive Train Control (PTC), and we were the first U.S.-based railroad to implement a comprehensive Safety Management System, as required by this Committee;

- We developed and began implementing long-term plans for capital investments and service improvements and expansion, as evidenced by the new service across four state-supported routes launched this year and our plan to restore Gulf Coast Service between New Orleans and Mobile;
- We launched a more than \$10 billion program to re-fleet Amtrak with new U.S.-made trains. New clean diesel locomotives for our National Network are being delivered, new high-speed *Acela* trainsets for the Northeast Corridor are being tested, and new Intercity Trainsets for *Northeast Regional* service and state-supported service are on order;
- We improved and maintained high Customer Satisfaction scores and on-time performance, where we dispatch the railroad, despite the challenges of old infrastructure and assets; and
- We kept our team and customers safe during the tumult of the pandemic and are restoring service to all our network thanks to the incredible support of Congress and the Biden Administration.

Because of these efforts, Amtrak and its partners were ready when Congress enacted the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, including the landmark Rail Title drafted by this Committee. This historic legislation provides the significant, multi-year capital funding for intercity passenger rail that Amtrak sought for decades. With these resources, Amtrak will finally be able to make vital investments in our network, and working with our partners, expand Amtrak service to underserved communities throughout the nation.

Our highest priority on the Northeast Corridor is to renew our centuries-old infrastructure so that we can improve reliability, capacity, and trip time. Construction of the Hudson Tunnel between New Jersey and New York and replacing the 150-year-old B&P Tunnel in Baltimore typify these efforts. Across the National Network, we are focused on improving Amtrak's Chicago Union Station, re-fleeting our long-distance trains, improving corridors and expanding service to new markets, and achieving full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act at our stations. These investments we will usher in a new era of intercity passenger rail in America.

To capitalize on this era, Amtrak will need your continued support. While the infrastructure bill's capital funding is a fantastic down payment, it will not be sufficient to overcome the generations of underinvestment in passenger rail nor will it fund our day-to-day operations, which relies on ongoing annual appropriations. We also face the challenge of rebuilding and growing our skilled workforce. While we hired over 2,800 new employees so far this fiscal year, we are seeking thousands more. Finally, poor on-time performance caused by some of our host railroads is a major and continuing challenge that threatens the viability of our system.

Nonetheless, now is an exciting time to be involved with Amtrak. Our nation absolutely needs energy-efficient intercity passenger rail service to reduce emissions and alleviate congestion. We all know traveling by Amtrak is so much greener than driving and flying and highway traffic is already exceeding pre-pandemic levels in many places. Meanwhile, airports and airspace are unable to accommodate even current travel demand. The case for expanding and improving Amtrak service is compelling.

Amtrak is ready to deliver a new era of passenger rail. I'm proud of what we've accomplished since I joined Amtrak's Board and I welcome the opportunity to continue my service. Thank you for all your support thus far, and I look forward to answering any questions.