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Pat Quinn
GOVERNOR

October 3, 2014

Mr. Daniel R. Elliott, III
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 East Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423

Dear Mr. Elliott:

The purpose of this letter is to express my support of Amtrak's complaint referencing the unsatisfactory on-time performance of the Chicago-Champaign-Carbondale trains supported by the state of Illinois. I am proud that Illinois provides the second-highest level of operating investment annually for Amtrak service, yet we have been increasingly frustrated by the performance of these essential trains serving our state's flagship university in Champaign-Urbana, as well as Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, and other important cities in between. Our state's residents deserve better than the poor on-time performance ratings cited by Amtrak and confirmed by my staff at the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), which tracks on-time performance for all corridors supported by the state. Over the past few years, the Champaign-Carbondale corridor has performed the worst of any of the four routes we support.

We will be following the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) review of this complaint closely. I am hopeful that the host Canadian National Railway (CN) will see this as an opportunity to improve its host railroad performance between Champaign and Carbondale – and also an opportunity to be more collaborative so that when we return to the negotiation table to discuss the extension of the new Chicago-Rockford route to Dubuque, CN will work with us to develop an infrastructure improvement budget that reflects only what will be needed to establish passenger service.

Illinois considers reliable, high-quality passenger rail service to be an essential component of 21st Century transportation. That's why we provide the annual operating support we do, as well as supply capital project funding to establish high-speed service between Chicago and St. Louis, and new corridors to both Rockford-Dubuque and Moline. We thus believe it is crucial for the STB to take a strong stand in this case so Amtrak's rights to running passenger trains are safeguarded, and so our state can continue to rely on passenger trains on routes running today, and those that we wish to build tomorrow.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. If you have questions or need further information, please contact IDOT's Acting Secretary, Erica J. Borggren, at (217) 782-6149.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Quinn".

Pat Quinn,
Governor

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