



July 20, 2012

Mr. Ray Lang
Amtrak, Director of Governmental Affairs-Midwest
500 West Jackson Blvd., 2nd Floor
Chicago, IL 60661

Dear Mr. Lang:

Amtrak's Southwest Chief passenger rail service in Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico is a vital link for communities in our three states. The Southwest Chief provides an important alternative for citizens who desire a safe, efficient mode of transportation. In addition to local citizens and businesses in our states that rely on the Southwest Chief service, Boy Scouts from around the country use the service to transport them to a lifetime experience at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico.

Unfortunately, as you have advised, the passenger rail service on the current alignment now faces a significant financial challenge. Because BNSF has shifted its freight operations from the current Southwest Chief route, the railroad no longer has a business reason for maintaining the line to a condition suitable for passenger rail operations. Without intervention, the Southwest Chief will likely be rerouted south at Newton, Kansas bypassing stops along the current route in western Kansas, southeastern Colorado, and northern New Mexico. We want to thank you for bringing this situation to our attention and for proposing a financial solution to address the situation.

Your proposal for the states to provide \$100 million for capital improvements over the next 10 years and to share \$10 million per year equally between Amtrak, BNSF, and all three states beginning in 2016 would require a significant investment by all of the proposed partners. Unfortunately, our states are unable to commit to the capital improvement or the ongoing maintenance of the Southwest Chief service at this time. We greatly value the service that the Southwest Chief provides to our citizens. However, all three states are facing budgetary challenges that prevent us from taking on additional commitments at this time.

Because the Southwest Chief is an Amtrak long distance train service funded by the U.S. Congress, we have contacted our U.S. Senators and Representatives of the affected communities to advise them of this situation. We will work with those Senators and Representatives to determine if another solution, including funding through Reauthorization of the Multi-Year Transportation Act, can be found to preserve service on the current alignment of this nationally important passenger rail service.

Thank you again for bringing this important issue to our attention. Please keep us informed, as we continue to seek a solution to this vital issue involving the routing of the Southwest Chief in our states.

Sincerely,

Donald Hunt
Director of the Colorado DOT

Mike King
Secretary of the Kansas DOT

Alvin C. Dominguez, P.E., Executive
Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico DOT

c: Mr. D.J. Mitchell, BNSF Assistant Vice President of Passenger Operations