November 29, 2022

Amit Bose
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for FY22 CRISI Program funding for
MassDOT Connecting the Commonwealth: Early Actions for the Inland Route (Project)

Dear Administrator Bose,

With this letter I am writing to offer our strong support for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) application for FY22 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program funding for the Connecting the Commonwealth: Early Actions for the Inland Route (Project).

In our view, this Project should be funded because it will establish an essential new intercity passenger rail corridor (the Inland Route) that will directly connect the cities of Boston, Worcester, Springfield, Hartford, and New Haven — five of the ten largest cities (by population) in New England.

The Project also logically builds upon the existing Hartford Line service — between Springfield, Hartford and New Haven — which was launched in 2018 by the Connecticut Department of Transportation and Amtrak.

In addition, this Project will provide new passenger rail service between the Springfield Metropolitan Area (pop. ca. 700,000) and the state capital, the City of Boston — where very limited service exists today.

Furthermore, the Project lays the foundation for future phases of a project that would provide additional passenger rail service west of Springfield to connect with the existing intercity passenger rail service along the Empire Corridor at Amtrak’s Albany–Rensselaer, New York station.

Service along the Inland Route was recently studied (in 2016) by MassDOT as part of a multi-year study known as the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative. This study included a Preferred Build Alternative that included eight (8) new daily round-trips between Boston, Springfield, Hartford, and New Haven.
Finally, this project will provide valuable benefits for the freight railroad CSX — the owner of the rail corridor between Worcester and Springfield — by reducing passenger and freight train conflicts and reducing travel times along this route. When completed both freight and passenger trains along this CSX corridor will benefit from the increase in operational efficiency and flexibility afforded by the investment and improvements made as part of the Project.

Trains In The Valley enthusiastically supports MassDOT’s application and sees it as an important investment as we continue to develop a more robust passenger rail network in our state and in our region.

As background, our organization has been actively advocating for expanded east-west rail service since 2016. On our website (trainsinthevalley.org) you will find a comprehensive overview and timeline of efforts to establish new passenger rail service west of Worcester over the past few years. The relevant page can be found on this link: East-West Rail in Massachusetts

Thank you for your consideration of this important project. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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