



May 12, 2022

Mr. Stephen Gardner, President and CEO
Amtrak
One Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Gardner:

We are in receipt of your letter dated May 6, 2022, which notified the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) that Amtrak will not be able to resume the Amtrak Cascades service between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. until at least December 2022. This delay is not acceptable to WSDOT and ODOT, our passengers, elected officials, or cities.

The states understand Amtrak is experiencing staffing shortages. Nonetheless, in recent months Amtrak has been able to fully re-establish services on most of the Northeast Corridor routes; expand service to routes in the Midwest; and restore daily service to all the long-distance routes.

WSDOT's operating agreement with Amtrak includes service to Canada within the current contract period. Amtrak notified us recently that the newly hired Amtrak staff, who were expected to support the Amtrak Cascades return to Canada, were instead assigned to support Amtrak's resumption of daily long-distance service. Amtrak's letter implies that Amtrak does not intend to assign additional staff to support the Amtrak Cascades corridor and therefore will not be providing the levels of service identified in WSDOT's operating agreement.

The Canadian border has been open to non-essential travel for more than six months. Amtrak started offering Cantrail bus service between Seattle and Vancouver on December 1, 2021, with the promise that train service would resume as soon as Amtrak established protocols for verifying the vaccine status of passengers. In preparation for this, Amtrak crews were re-qualified on the route; equipment was identified to provide at least one daily round trip; the Washington State Legislature allocated funding for the service; and messaging was shared with the public about plans to resume service in spring 2022.

Amtrak's lack of support for the Amtrak Cascades service cannot continue and Amtrak's plans to delay the re-start of Canadian service for seven months or more is not acceptable to WSDOT and ODOT. The states expect some level of train service to resume between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. sooner than Amtrak's letter suggests. As the states and Amtrak have discussed over the last several months, the states are willing to accept at least weekend service or a staggered service throughout the week until resumption of full service. However, the states cannot accept Amtrak's plan to provide no service at all.

WSDOT and ODOT look forward to Amtrak developing a path forward that provides service between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. this summer.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Roger Millar in black ink.

Roger Millar, PE, FASCE, FAICP
Washington Secretary of Transportation

Handwritten signature of Kris Strickler in blue ink.

Kris Strickler
Director, Oregon Department of Transportation

cc: Ray Lang, Amtrak
Jeff Mann, Amtrak
Ron Pate, WSDOT
Karyn Criswell, ODOT