



August 21, 2019

The Honorable Joe Manchin
United States Senate
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Manchin:

The Rail Users' Network is the only nationwide rail advocacy group that speaks for the riders of long distance, commuter, and rail transit customers. We have members all over the US, and have been successful in bringing and expanding rail service to various parts of the country. That is why we are writing to you today, to express our dismay and outrage over proposed cuts that will negatively affect rail service to West Virginia.

As you know, the Maryland Department of Transportation has proposed discontinuing rail service on their Brunswick Line to stations in West Virginia, due to West Virginia's lack of payment for MARC services in your state. We hope you will reconsider this decision, and once again have this important rail service on which hundreds, if not thousands rely - running in your beautiful state.

Not having rail service to Harpers Ferry (an important tourist attraction), Martinsburg, or Duffields is short-sighted, to say the least. Having this easy access from the Washington, D.C. area has inspired thousands of tourists to visit your beautiful state, spending money in restaurants, stores, and hotels. It may well guarantee a return visit, resulting in even more tax dollars spent in the Mountain State. Of course, when there used to be morning departures from Washington to Martinsburg, tourists could easily take a day trip and see the sights, then return in the afternoon. With the present schedule, that is no longer possible, which we believe hurts tourism to West Virginia. Of course, NO SERVICE will add considerably to the misery. As we're sure you're aware, many commuters utilize this line to commute to jobs in the Washington, D.C. area, thus depriving those folks of the benefits of living in West Virginia, but working in the DC Metro area. And - if many of these folks switch to driving, there will be additional costs to keeping highways maintained, which may require considerably more dollars than keeping the trains running. So, it seems to us that the dollars saved in not funding the rail service will be

more than compensated for in additional highway maintenance, lost tourism, lost tax revenue, etc.

Of course, we understand there is other rail service in the State, having ridden the Cardinal many times. But one does not cancel out the other. The Brunswick Line of MARC is important for a variety of reasons, and we hope you will not be sending out a signal that West Virginia is not a rail-friendly state. Rails helped to build West Virginia, and can continue to do so, given the chance.

Sincerely,

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Chair
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