

Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund Act

The **Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund Act** would establish a new Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund, and provide roughly \$5.4 billion to that fund annually in mandatory appropriations. More precisely, the bill provides for an appropriation equal to 50% of the average annual cash transfer from the General and LUST Trust Funds to the Highway Trust Fund in Fiscal Years 2008-2020 (inclusive) as authorized from Sept. 15, 2008 through Dec. 4, 2015 (P.L.s 110-318, 111-46, 111-147, 112-25, 112-141, 113-159, 114-41, & 114-94). For comparison, annual Highway Trust Fund outlays have averaged roughly \$55.3 billion in the last three fiscal years (82% highway, 18% transit); **see Figure 1 for further context.** Additional funding for the Trust Fund would be authorized, but not required.

The Secretary of Transportation would make Trust Fund funds available to Amtrak as grants; 40% would be reserved for the Northeast Corridor (Washington—New York—Boston), and 60% would be reserved for the National Network (Amtrak’s State-Supported and Long-Distance service lines). Funds would remain available until expended, and could be used for both capital and operating needs.

Trust Fund funding at the proposed level would allow Amtrak to address unmet needs across every part of its network. Predictable capital funding leads to better project design and cheaper construction; along the **Northeast Corridor**, where Amtrak is the principal right-of-way owner, these funds would help to gradually bring assets into a state of good repair while supporting other useful improvements. (Priorities would include major bridges and tunnels, new trainsets, and trip time-reducing investments.) For the **State-Supported** service line, funding would help Amtrak and its state partners to cover the costs of initiating new corridor service (and improving existing service) in rapidly-growing regions across the country. And for the **Long-Distance** service line (routes at least 750 miles in length), funding would help modernize products and services through re-fleeting, measures to improve on-time performance, and other needed investments.

The Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund Act would explicitly allow continued discretionary appropriations to Amtrak. The Appropriations Committees would retain oversight authority, but would not need to provide obligation limitation or liquidation of contract authority in order for Trust Fund funds to be used.

