

**Testimony of Mr. Tony Coscia
Nominee to the Amtrak Board of Directors
United States Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
Hearing on Nominations, June 21, 2023**

Good morning, Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Cruz, and members of the Committee.

I am Tony Coscia, the Chairman of the Amtrak Board of Directors. I am honored to serve on Amtrak's Board and to have the opportunity to work with our dedicated Amtrak employees and stakeholders. I am also grateful for the extraordinary level of support for passenger rail and Amtrak that this Committee and Congress have demonstrated.

When I joined Amtrak's Board in 2010 the company was still recovering from the near bankruptcy in the 2000s that had eroded confidence in its management and mission. There was no clear path for Amtrak's future, and some questioned whether Amtrak and its national network should continue to exist.

I am proud to say that since then, Amtrak, working with our partners, has made significant progress:

- We grew ridership nationwide and attracted millions of new customers, while significantly improving financial performance. By the end of FY2019, Amtrak eliminated over \$300 million in annual operating losses, enabling us to increase spending on long-overdue capital projects.
- We completed the nationwide installation of Positive Train Control and were the first U.S.-based railroad to implement a comprehensive Safety Management System.
- We launched a more than \$10 billion program to re-fleet Amtrak with new, energy-efficient, U.S.-made trains.
- We improved customer satisfaction despite the challenges of operating over aged infrastructure and on host railroads that often fail to give Amtrak its vital statutory preference over freight trains.

- We safely maintained operations during the COVID-19 pandemic and have restored pre-pandemic service levels on nearly all routes.
- We hired over 3,700 new employees in fiscal year 2022, and an additional 2,700 during the first seven months of FY23. These new hires – our workforce of the future – have allowed us to restore our operations. Amtrak investments are creating a pathway for strong job opportunities, particularly in segments of the economy that in the past have not benefited from capital expansion. A career at Amtrak and in passenger rail represents an opportunity to develop skills that form the basis of a long-term career.

Amtrak and its state partners were ready when Congress enacted the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which provides the significant, multi-year capital funding for intercity passenger rail we have sought for decades. Using that funding, we will finally be able to make vital investments in infrastructure and equipment, and pursue the improvement and expansion of Amtrak service the IIJA contemplates.

On the Northeast Corridor, we have commenced early construction activities to replace the 150-year-old B&P Tunnel in Baltimore and construction of Gateway's Hudson River Tunnel is expected to commence next year.

On our National Network, we are working with our partners to seek discretionary grants to improve and expand Amtrak service, including in states such as Ohio, West Virginia, Tennessee, Minnesota, Idaho, Kansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Colorado and Arizona that have little Amtrak service today.

We intend to spend \$1.3 billion in IIJA funding to complete the task of bringing all of the stations on our network for which Amtrak is responsible into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Last December, Amtrak initiated the procurement of new passenger railcars for our 14 overnight long-distance routes. The new cars will replace our existing fleet with modern equipment that will improve safety, reliability, accessibility, and financial performance. This procurement, the largest U.S. order for long-distance passenger cars since the 1940s, reflects Amtrak's

commitment to our long-distance network and our recognition of how important that network is to the communities it serves. The long-distance system is the connective tissue for the National Network that provides an anchor to expand ridership.

Overcoming many decades of underinvestment in passenger rail will not be accomplished overnight. Like every other transportation mode, passenger rail will require continued, sustained investment beyond the five-year horizon of the IIJA. If I am confirmed, I can assure you that Amtrak will be a good steward of the funding you have provided, and that what we accomplish with it will make the case for continued investment.

There has never been a more exciting time to be involved with Amtrak. Our nation needs improved and expanded intercity passenger rail service to alleviate congestion, reduce emissions and provide mobility to our citizens. I'm proud of what we have accomplished since I joined Amtrak's Board and I welcome the opportunity to continue my service. Thank you for all your support thus far, and I look forward to answering your questions today.