

All Aboard **NORTHWEST**

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Testimony on HB 4109 February 8, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Amendment 4 to HB 4109. I am Charles Hamilton, speaking on behalf of All Aboard Northwest, the passenger rail working group serving the Greater Northwest.

The Federal Railroad Administration is currently conducting a study that will recommend re-starting passenger rail services to communities not currently served. The study committee is meeting today in Seattle, and we understand that they will recommend re-starting service along the route of Amtrak's previous *Pioneer* train, among others.

The cooperative efforts proposed by Amendment 4 will be central to making this service happen.

In addition, the FRA has been directed by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to fund interstate rail compacts to coordinate regional passenger and freight planning efforts. Therefore, we strongly support the creation of a working group including stakeholders in Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Washington and the other states of the Greater Northwest that will lay the groundwork for a regional rail compact..

Throughout the world, passenger and freight rail is successfully bringing significant economic, environmental and equity benefits to citizens and communities of all sizes.

We need transportation that provides safe, reliable, frequent, competitive, and convenient passenger rail services that meet the needs of everyone in the region, including low-income, tribal, and rural communities, people with disabilities, locations where transportation alternatives are limited, and the thirty percent of the population that does not drive.

Right now, there is an unprecedented amount of Federal funding available. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law offers \$66 billion in funding for rail. Let's take advantage of this opportunity, and build a rail system serving the whole state and the entire region.

Thank you for your consideration.