



**AmeriStarRail**  
*Transportation Innovation*

January 4, 2023

Mr. Amit Bose  
Administrator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bose,

On December 15, 2022, Amtrak President Roger Harris announced that the new Amtrak Airo trainsets, being built by Siemens with funding through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), will first replace trains in 2026 on their Cascade route in the Pacific Northwest. If Amtrak follows this plan, the Amfleet cars on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) will not be replaced until years after they pass their half-century mark of service. This poses unknown safety issues because, at speeds up to 125 MPH, no rail passenger service in North American railroad history has operated passenger train cars so old, so fast.

After the tragic wreck of Amtrak Train 188 in 2015, I co-authored an OpEd article November 5, 2015 in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The purpose of the article was to urge Congress, the FRA and Amtrak to take the safest course of action to remove Amfleet cars from high-speed NEC service as soon as possible. As you know, although these cars, built in the 1970s, meet current FRA safety standards, they do not have the structural materials, safety features, technology and crash energy management systems found in the current Acela fleet or the next generation Alstom built Acela fleet.

As detailed in the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) accident report of Amtrak Train 188, the derailment and resulting impact of the 40+ year old Amfleet cars into the lineside catenary poles contributed to the severity of the wreck, loss of life and injuries. The NTSB report also identified rollover of the Amfleet cars and subsequent window systems failures as additional areas needing safety improvements. I am not trying to lay blame; rather to highlight the urgency of the Amfleet situation.

Since over 70% of Northeast Corridor passengers ride Amfleet cars, these safety issues disproportionately affect senior citizens, students, families, persons with disabilities and low-income coach passengers who cannot afford to ride the Acela trainsets which have improved safety features. On December 11, 2019 AmeriStarRail proposed to Amtrak, a privately funded solution, to replace the Amfleet cars with a standardized fleet of the Alstom Avelia Liberty trainsets to serve all passengers with Triple-Class service of coach, business and first class on every train. The articulated technology of these trainsets have been credited with preventing rollovers and maintaining the stability and integrity of trainsets during high-speed derailments, which is vital for protecting passengers.

Under the AmeriStarRail plan to improve Amtrak's Northeast Corridor services, the 54-year-old Metroliner cab car coaches will be removed from Keystone Service immediately and Amfleet cars will be removed from Northeast Corridor service beginning this year and be completely replaced before they mark 50 years of service in August 2025.

Due to the importance of providing all passengers with the highest levels of safety on the Northeast Corridor, we at AmeriStarRail request that you facilitate a conference call with the appropriate officials at the FRA, Amtrak, NTSB and AmeriStarRail this month to discuss the safety advantages of implementing our proposal to replace Amfleet cars on the Northeast Corridor with safer trainsets as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Paul H. Reistrup  
Former President of Amtrak  
Senior Advisor for AmeriStarRail

Cc: USDOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg  
NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy  
Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner  
Members of Congress