

CONEG POLICY

Principles Guiding the Future of Northeast Corridor (NEC) Network

The Northeast Governors believe that a safe, secure, efficient and reliable passenger rail system must be an overriding objective of any change in national transportation policy and the current intercity passenger rail system. Intercity passenger rail – the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and its extensions – is a critical component of the integrated transportation network that provides mobility and supports economic development throughout the Northeast and Atlantic Coast region. An adequately financed, multi-year solution is essential to avoid costly disruptions in intercity and commuter rail service and ensure continued progress in vital infrastructure improvements.

Any proposals for change affecting the Northeast Corridor Network should adhere to the following principles:

- **Ensure Safety and Security:** Safety and security must continue to be a paramount concern in the planning, management, operations and funding of the Northeast Corridor Network.
- **Invest in Intercity Passenger Rail Capital Needs:** Chronic federal underfunding of intercity passenger rail capital needs and years of deferred maintenance are jeopardizing the reliability of intercity and commuter passenger rail service. Increased capital for infrastructure and equipment is essential for efficient and cost-effective service on the Northeast Corridor Network. The federal government must be a strong and consistent partner in providing stable, long-term funding for intercity passenger rail.
- **Continue a Strong Federal Role in Funding NEC State of Good Repair:** Since the NEC is a national and regional public transportation asset, the states and federal government must collaborate in inventorying its assets and defining its State of Good Repair. The federal government has the dominant funding responsibility for State of Good Repair, and should continue in a long term federal-state funding partnership to help maintain the NEC and enhance its capacity for expanded rail service.
- **Strengthen State Involvement in Intercity Passenger Rail Decisions:** States are currently partners in funding and operating passenger service on the NEC Network. Within a federal-state partnership, states provide a share of the financial investment for services that promote state and regional economies, including capacity enhancement of the passenger rail system and the long-term maintenance of the NEC infrastructure once restored to a State of Good Repair. Governance, funding and management changes that affect the states or their commuter rail operations, including allocation of costs and modification of services, must result from collaborative processes with the states and should provide a neutral mechanism to resolve disagreements.

- **Undertake Change in a Timely and Orderly Manner:** Changes in the current intercity passenger rail system must occur in a timely but orderly manner. Any changes – in the funding, infrastructure, operations or institutional responsibility for the NEC Network – must be developed in consultation with the states, and must be based upon transparent data and rigorous metrics, feasible for the complex, multi-state nature of the Network, and undertaken in an orderly fashion that does not jeopardize current intercity, commuter and freight service.
- **Maintain Public Control of the NEC To Ensure Priority to Passenger Rail Services:** The Northeast Corridor is a nationally significant transportation asset that has been developed with significant federal and state investments. It must continue to be managed as a public transportation corridor, with access for critical intercity, commuter and freight services where shared trackage is vital to economic development. Public oversight and control of the Northeast Corridor infrastructure is essential to ensuring safe, secure and reliable passenger services.
- **Enhance Efficiency:** Any change in policy or the current passenger rail system should enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of capital investment and operations for intercity, commuter and freight rail users of the NEC Network.

Adopted by the Governors
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