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September 21, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Democratic Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer,

As discussions continue with regard to a continuing resolution, I write to highlight the importance of Amtrak's long distance routes, and in particular the Empire Builder. Continuous, reliable service is critical to the Hi-Line in Montana and I urge prohibitions on service and staff reductions for these essential routes be included in any government funding bill that comes before the Senate.

Amtrak's plan to cut staff by twenty percent, and reduce service on the Empire Builder from daily to tri-weekly on October 19, would decimate rural economies in Montana and leave tens of thousands without daily access to the national transportation network. The Empire Builder provides rural Montanans a safe and reliable mode of transportation to and from major cities, giving them greater access to necessities such as world class healthcare. Additionally, it is critical to our tourism economy, bringing thousands each year to visit our pristine wilderness and National Parks. Further, the reductions in staff could leave thousands without a job in the midst of a once in a generation pandemic.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and I look forward to working with you to find a solution to this pending crisis.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES  
United States Senator