



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE
55 SE THIRD AVENUE
OKEECHOBEE, FL 34974
Phone: (863) 763-3372
www.cityofokeechobee.com

Okeechobee City Council
Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr.
Vice Mayor Monica Clark
Noel Chandler
Bob Jarriel
David McAuley

July 25, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary Duffy,

Thank you for your steadfast commitment to expanding and modernizing America's passenger rail network.

I urge you to work closely with Amtrak to expedite the procurement of new coaches and sleepers for the long-distance network—beginning with replacements for the aging Superliner equipment serving routes in the western United States. The current fleet is insufficient to meet passenger demand and continues to shrink as equipment reaches the end of its service life or is sidelined by accidents. As a result, thousands of travelers are turned away each year due to lack of capacity.

This issue is not new—replacement orders should have been initiated years ago. The recent discovery of advanced corrosion in Horizon cars, which led to their complete withdrawal from service, underscores the growing vulnerability of Amtrak's equipment base and serves as a clear warning signal.

Amtrak's long-distance trains are indispensable to national mobility. They serve as critical lifelines to rural communities while connecting metropolitan centers, providing convenient single-seat rides across numerous city pairs. These services offer unparalleled efficiency and access, especially for working-class Americans.

To ensure long-distance service is preserved and strengthened, the new fleet should incorporate proven designs, emphasize durability and reliability, and leverage the existing American supply chain wherever possible. Simplicity and functionality should guide interior design, with a focus on the needs of everyday travelers.

We also urge you to collaborate with Congress to secure the necessary funding for timely deployment of new trainsets, coupled with strong oversight and accountability measures. Accelerating these investments will provide a safer, modern onboard experience, on equipment built, operated, and maintained by American workers. It is essential for the long-term viability of these rail services that Congress continue to support these investments in our domestic manufacturing industry and the associated supply chain.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, and for your continued leadership in shaping a more connected nation.

Respectfully,


Dowling R. Watford Jr., Mayor