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April 12, 2021

Hon. Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

**Re: New passenger rail service between WNY and Toronto, ON, and resumption of Shared Border Management planning**

Dear Mr. President:

As a longtime advocate for passenger rail in the United States, you know the tremendous economic and cultural opportunities that robust and reliable intercity passenger rail can bring. I was pleased to see that the American Jobs Plan includes \$80 billion to address capital needs at Amtrak. I was also pleased to see that Amtrak's recent long-range planning document, Connect US, advanced the concept of enhanced passenger rail service between Toronto, Ontario and Niagara Falls and Buffalo, New York.

In the context of ambitious rail planning on Amtrak's part and the prospect of unprecedented investment in U.S. intercity passenger rail by the federal government, I write today to advocate that the federal government and Amtrak prioritize direct and enhanced service between Toronto, Ontario and Niagara Falls and Buffalo, New York. Further, recognizing that prior to COVID-19, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Amtrak and their Canadian partners had been making steady progress in planning efforts around a shared-border management approach to the three current international passenger rail routes, I write to advocate that the immediate resumption of this work, as the reduction of border wait times will make existing and new international passenger rail services more efficient, and a viable mode of transportation compared to other options.

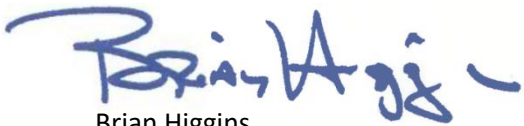
Canadian authorities are already investing substantially in the portion of the route in Canada, as part of the recent establishment of daily commuter rail service between Toronto and Niagara Falls, Ontario. Previous studies suggest that signal and track enhancements in the U.S. to support expanded service could cost in the range of \$10-20 million, and include double-tracking the CSX Niagara Branch in places where it is currently only a single track.

Toronto is a global hub of finance and culture, and Canada's largest city. The future economic health and vitality of Niagara Falls and Buffalo New York is tied to taking full advantage of the economic and life-quality opportunities that close proximity to Toronto makes available. Because the current Maple Leaf service originates 400 miles away in New York City before it arrives in Western New York on its way to Toronto, it is frequently late by the time it arrives here, and is therefore not a sufficiently reliable and predictable link between Western New York and Toronto. Reliable, predictable and direct service to

Toronto will provide significant economic and life-quality benefits to Western New York, and I encourage your administration to aggressively pursue its advancement.

Thank you for your leadership not only with regard to passenger rail, but in advancing a robust infrastructure initiative that will set the table for economic growth for decades to come, and thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress