

July 8, 2010

Joseph Boardman
President and CEO
Amtrak
50 Massachusetts Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Boardman:

We understand that Amtrak is in the process of ordering new rail cars for its passenger trains. As we are interested in maximizing the tourist appeal and resulting economic potential of New York's Canalway Trail system, we request that this new rolling stock be designed to carry bikes, both in baggage cars and in the luggage area within passenger cars. Part of the cost could be recovered by imposing a ticket surcharge for this extra service.

As a former Commissioner for the NYS Department of Transportation and a native of Oneida County, you are familiar with New York's magnificent Canalway Trail system and its growing popularity, especially among touring cyclists. Extending 524 miles across the state, the Canalway Trail system brings economic, public health, tourism, and quality of life benefits to more than one million New Yorkers living in upstate canal communities. When complete, it will be the longest multi-use trail in the nation.

For more than a decade we have been working to actively promote trail-related tourism and make the Canalway Trail a premier tourist destination for cyclists and other outdoor enthusiasts. A growing attraction is the ability to ride the trail across the state between Buffalo and Albany. Parks & Trails New York's Cycling the Erie Canal, an eight-day bike tour from Buffalo to Albany, now in its 12th year, annually attracts more than 500 riders from across the nation and the world. Parks & Trails New York's *Cycling the Erie Canal* guidebook has sold more than 7,500 copies since first published in 2005. Many of those purchasers were planning a cross-state ride.

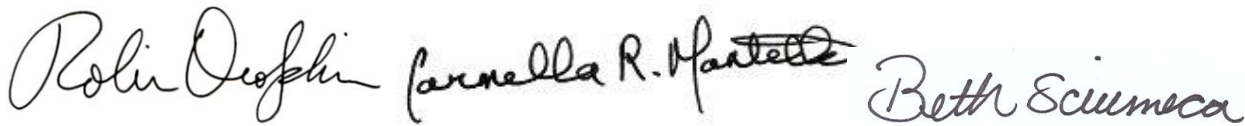
As attractive as such a ride can be, logistically it can be difficult for cyclists who don't want to bike back to where they left their car. Cyclists often inquire about taking the train back to their starting location. Although Amtrak serves Buffalo, Albany, and all the major cities along the Erie Canalway Trail, bikes are not allowed to be rolled onto trains as they are in other parts of the country. This is a lost opportunity for Amtrak.

We believe that designing new train cars that can accommodate bicycles is a wise investment for Amtrak as the bicycle tourism market is steadily growing. The US Travel Association reports that bicycling is now the third most common vacation activity and in the past five years 27 million Americans have taken a bicycling vacation.

It is also a wise investment for the economic future of the communities that Amtrak serves as it will help attract more cyclists who will spend their dollars on restaurants, entertainment, and lodging. Already, according to an economic report recently released by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, heritage tourism in the Rome to Albany region generates \$38 million in sales at local businesses, which supports 507 local jobs paying \$14 million in wages. In addition, a study conducted by Eric Mower and Associates in 2008 estimated the tourism related economic impact generated by the New York State Canal System, including the Canalway Trail, to be \$378 million annually.

Please give this request for better accommodation of bicycles on Amtrak trains in New York State your fullest consideration. We will be happy to provide more information or answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



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