



State of New York  
**Executive Chamber**  
Albany 12224

**Andrew M. Cuomo**  
GOVERNOR

May 21, 2017

The Honorable Donald Trump  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

The negative impact of the state of disrepair at Penn Station has reached a tipping point. As you know, the station is in deplorable condition and has been for years. However, the recent track breakdowns and mechanical problems have made the situation intolerable.

Thousands of commuters have been stranded for hours, in packed corridors, and the conditions have been described as "near riot." The circumstances are so bad that the State legislature convened emergency hearings with Amtrak officials.

Amtrak has now announced that they will do emergency repairs on the tracks this summer. It just isn't feasible for the system to sustain this trauma.

Penn Station is subject to a daily flow of 600,000 passengers, more than half of which are New Yorkers who use the Long Island Rail Road to travel between Manhattan and Long Island each work day. Included in that total, are tens of thousands of New Jersey, regional and national passengers.

Regrettably, Amtrak only now notified the regional transit systems that use Penn Station that in order to complete work this summer, they will have to dramatically cut service. It is projected that this cut could result in an approximately 20 percent reduction in its peak hours of service for commuters who depend on this service every day. This reduced capacity will create a domino effect. We will see increased delays at surrounding regional transit systems, and our infrastructure will be stretched to its limits as they absorb a high volume of citizens in search of alternate routes. This is on top of a 100-year old MTA subway system, which as you know, has been underfunded and overburdened for decades and is already beyond its limits.

Amtrak's need to cut service this summer has created both a short-term crisis and dramatically exposed the system's chronic problems.

Amtrak's summer work proposal suggests they can get the work done in approximately six weeks. Even if true, this will be a summer of agony as thousands of commuters would be significantly inconvenienced and alternative routes and means would be swamped. This will overload the subway system and drive many more commuters onto our highways, bridges and tunnels.

We are open to working with the federal government on any and all short-term options. Operating a new advanced park and ride system on Long Island with private coaches and a bus only HOV lane is being studied. The possibility of high speed ferries from Long Island is also being considered. The point being, we are open to creative solutions.

Furthermore, long-term I believe Amtrak operation of Penn Station is not sustainable or wise. Penn Station and the MTA have suffered from a common ailment, which is fifty years of under investment and gross overloading of an old network. Even without the current difficulties Penn Station was intolerable. I have referred to the station as reminding me of the Catacombs – claustrophobic, threatening and crumbling. Once again, we would be open to considering a number of options. We could consider the Port Authority taking over Penn Station and including it in the operation and construction of the Gateway Tunnel which – as your Department of Transportation Secretary recently noted – is an urgent necessity. There are many benefits to gain by expediting the Gateway Tunnel construction, restoring Penn and combining it with the Farley Post Office renovation already underway. We could build a state-of-the-art, secure, world-class transportation hub. This would fit with your proposal for \$1 Trillion plan for federal infrastructure investments to rebuild America, and urge you to consider this critical request as you and Congress begin a dialogue on federal budget priorities. That is the best way forward on many levels.

At a minimum, I believe Amtrak should turn over construction and operations to a private sector terminal operator because all the past experience has suggested that Amtrak does not have the funds and expertise to consistently invest and manage over the long-term Penn Station's complex combination of track infrastructure and terminal operation. Indeed, in most parts of the country Amtrak does not in fact operate the terminals but instead uses qualified private managers. I know that you believe in privatization where appropriate and in this situation I think there is no doubt that it is appropriate.

The State is, and will do, its part. After years of insufficient funds, the State has provided record funding to the MTA in a \$29 billion capital plan. The MTA has recently announced a six point short-term plan for improvements. We are accelerating the long-stalled Farley Post Office conversion, which will give an alternative entrance to Penn Station. But even with this extensive state effort, it is not enough. Penn Station is an essential operating component of the overall system.

As I believe the Penn Station problems may very well elude resolution, and the MTA is already beyond its limits, I will be calling on the MTA to find new ways to accelerate the long term capital plan and on our local governments to assist in funding that plan to the extent necessary. I think New York City and the other local governments now fully recognize the critical needs of the MTA and will meet their financial obligation.

However, as Amtrak's Penn Station is a critical component of the system and under federal control, we need your assistance.

I request that the federal government treat this as an emergency situation and provide funding for the short-term Penn construction and transportation alternatives and facilitation of a long-term resolution for Penn Station.

While this is not a hurricane or flood it will affect as many people and businesses with dire consequences. Like a natural disaster, we didn't create it but our public offices require we address it. As in most emergencies, this is not a political issue and bipartisan officials will agree that we need immediate help. This situation affects the entire northeast region.

As a New Yorker, I think you know the severity of the situation and you know that if the state has the financial and operating support, we will get the job done.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Cuomo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a distinct "Cuomo" at the end.