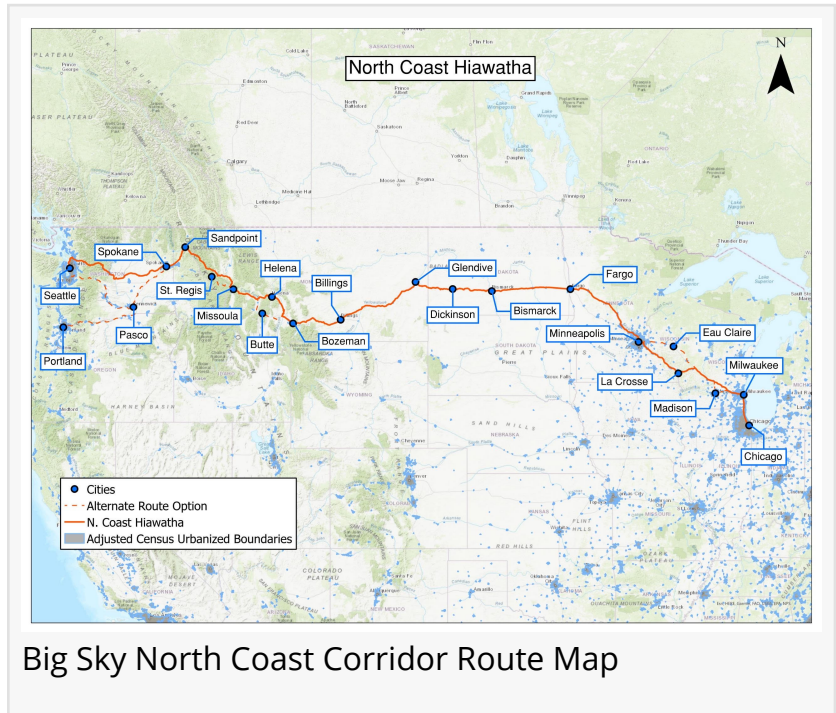


Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority Applauds FRA Report, Highlights Big Sky North Coast Corridor

BILLINGS, MT, UNITED STATES, January 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority ([BSPRA](#)) welcomes the release of the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) final report on the Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study. This long-anticipated document outlines recommendations for restoring and expanding long-distance passenger rail services across the United States, including the pivotal Big Sky North Coast Corridor, which is vital for the economic and transportation needs of the Greater Northwest.



Big Sky North Coast Corridor Route Map

The FRA's study identifies 15 potential routes for restoration or initiation, several of which traverse the Greater Northwest. Among them is the Big Sky North Coast Corridor, which reconnects rural, urban, and tribal communities across Montana, North Dakota, and beyond. The inclusion of this corridor reflects years of advocacy by regional stakeholders and BSPRA's efforts to ensure transportation access for all communities.

Advocacy and Partnership: A Blueprint for Implementation

The Big Sky North Coast Corridor, formerly known as the North Coast Hiawatha route, is the only new long-distance route in the FRA study that has also been accepted into FRA's Corridor Identification and Development Program (Corridor ID). Acceptance into this program brought an initial \$500,000 for scoping of a full-blown service development plan for the route and will support critical planning, coordination, and project development. The FRA's recognition of the Big Sky North Coast Corridor reaffirms the importance of continued advocacy and investment in passenger rail and takes the corridor beyond feasibility study to project development.

"The FRA report is an important step forward, but now is the time to act," said Dave Strohmaier,

Chairman of BSPRA. “We need Congress to allocate funding and resources to turn these recommendations into reality. The Big Sky North Coast Corridor is more than a transportation project; it’s a lifeline for our communities, economies, and the environment and an opportunity to show the nation what a model passenger rail service can look like in the 21st century. Now is the time to bring the full force of America’s creative, entrepreneurial, and can-do spirit to the table and get the job done.”

In addition to the Big Sky North Coast Corridor, the FRA report identifies a preferred route from El Paso, TX, to Billings, MT. This route would form the foundation for a future cross-border passenger rail connection to Alberta.

Elaine Clegg: A Strong Voice for the Northwest

BSPRA is especially encouraged by the recent appointment of Elaine Clegg to the Amtrak Board of Directors. A longtime advocate for rail service and sustainable transportation, Clegg’s leadership will be instrumental in championing the needs of the Northwest and ensuring that the FRA’s recommendations translate into actionable outcomes. Her experience working with communities and regional planning organizations in the Boise, ID, region aligns with BSPRA’s mission to foster collaboration across the corridor.

The Role of the Government Partners Committee

The BSPRA Government Partners Committee, which brings together Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), cities, and towns along the route, has been a critical platform for aligning regional priorities. These partnerships will be crucial in advocating for federal funding and mobilizing local support for the Big Sky North Coast Corridor.

Next Steps

The release of the FRA report is only the beginning. BSPRA calls on Congress to act swiftly to implement these recommendations, prioritizing funding to restore the Big Sky North Coast Corridor. The Authority urges stakeholders, community leaders, and advocates to join forces in advancing this transformative project.

To read the FRA’s full report, visit [Amtrak Daily Long-Distance Service Study Final Report 2025](#).

About BSPRA

The Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) is Montana’s first regional passenger rail authority. It is dedicated to restoring and expanding rail service to connect communities and drive economic growth across the state and region. BSPRA represents counties, municipalities, and tribal nations along the proposed Big Sky North Coast Corridor.

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