



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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RETURN REQUESTED

HOUSE HELPS; CARTER CUTS

"We are absolutely opposed. It's a little bit ludicrous (to start emerging corridors work) if we are trying to balance the budget."

—Secretary of Transportation Neil Goldschmidt
(quoted in *The Sacramento Union*, Apr. 4)

The U.S. House of Representatives gave intercity rail passenger corridors outside Boston-Washington a resounding vote of confidence on Mar. 31 hours after the Carter Administration released a scaled-back Fiscal Year 1981 budget in which rail passenger cuts accounted for \$100 million out of Department of Transportation cutbacks totalling \$1.1 billion, as compared with the budget submitted to Congress Jan. 28. Looked at another way, the President recommends cutting passenger train outlays by 7.3%, while cutting DOT as a whole by only 5.9%.

The House vote came on an amendment by Tom Hagedorn (R-MN) which proposed to delete "emerging corridors" provisions from HR 6837, an omnibus rail bill which also includes money for the Northeast Corridor and for Rock Island Railroad labor protection. The Hagedorn amendment was killed 84-266.

The bill, as reported from the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee and passed by the full House, would authorize \$55 million for engineering and design work on 13 corridors (Feb. News, table on p. 4) and feasible extensions thereof, and \$50 mil-

lion for rollingstock. Funds would come from revenues generated by the recently enacted crude oil "windfall" profits tax. The bill also "stakes out a claim" (words of Subcommittee Ranking Minority Member Edward R. Madigan (R-IL)) on \$850 million of "windfall" revenues for track construction, but Congress would have to "reauthorize" the construction money after receiving results of the engineering and design work and reviewing rankings of the corridors performed by DOT.

Our best wishes to H. Rex Holland, who was Amtrak's Assistant Vice President, On Board Services, until he recently retired from active employment due to personal health considerations. We at NARP are most appreciative of having had the opportunity to work with him and watch the improvements he achieved. NARP members are encouraged to send messages of good cheer to him at 8724 Falkstone Lane, Alexandria, VA 22309.

As Congress recessed in early April, the Senate Commerce Committee indicated it would only go to conference with the House on the Rock Island labor provisions, the only section of HR 6837 to which the Senate had already passed comparable legislation. (These labor provisions consisted primarily of "loan guarantees" to provide the labor protection considered neces-

(Continued on p. 4)

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY: AMTRAK'S APRIL 27 TIMETABLE

The best news won't show in the timetable due to late completion of details: inauguration April 27 of a daylight Philadelphia-Pittsburgh train partly funded by Pennsylvania; expected to depart Phila. about 9 AM westbound, Pittsburgh about noon eastbound. Start-up of a planned "shopper's" Pittsburgh-Altoona train must be delayed due to lack of facilities in Altoona.

The Seattle-to-Chicago "Empire Builder" will run earlier (depart Seattle 4:30 PM, arrive Chicago 6:04 PM) providing a guaranteed connection with the Chicago-to-NY/DC "Broadway Ltd." which leaves Chicago at 7:30 PM.

The Vancouver (BC)-to-Seattle train will originate at 7 AM, arrive Seattle 11:30 AM, and regain its connection with the Seattle-to-LA "Coast Starlight." (The bus connection will be terminated.) The southbound "Starlight" and the LA-to-Chicago "Southwest Ltd." will run 45 minutes later (exactly 45 minutes at end-points, possible minor variations at intermediate stops).

Kansas City will thus get a more attractive departure time for its fast train to Chicago (about 7:05 instead of 6:20 AM; arrive Chicago 3:50 PM), while guaranteed connections from the eastbound "Southwest Ltd." to the Chicago-Port Huron "Blue Water" and Chicago-New Orleans "Panama

Ltd." will be lost, and Milwaukee connections will become less convenient.

Amtrak has agreed to reroute the "Starlight" through Sacramento and hopes to do this by the fall of 1981. This should not require lengthening the train's overall running time since the added mileage will be offset by restoration of higher speeds on curves when lighter locomotives are assigned as Superliners become available. This does mean, however, that the April 27 schedule of the eastbound "Southwest Ltd." will remain indefinitely, derailing previous hopes (Oct. News, p. 2) for restoring its connection to the eastbound Chicago-NY/Boston "Lake Shore Ltd."

The northbound "Colonial" will depart Newport News for Boston at 6:30 AM, one hour earlier than at present.

This is expected to be the worst year for trackwork-related delays on the Northeast Corridor, since most of the work will be south of New York and the Wilmington-Washington section has the highest ratio of trains to main tracks in the Corridor.

Most Amtrak fares—except for some commuter and long-distance tickets—will rise 7 to 10% on Apr. 27. Round-trip excursion discounts scheduled to expire this May will be extended through Oct. 25.

On Mar. 10, Amtrak resumed sales of the International U.S.A. RAIL PASS.



Texas Rail Renaissance?

Rep. Bob Eckhardt (D-TX) says the Texas Turnpike Authority should scrap recently developed plans for a 31-mile Houston-Shenandoah toll road along the Missouri Pacific right-of-way. He favors upgrading the rail line instead to a triple-track, largely grade-separated corridor with commuter trains as far as Conroe (36 miles).

A 1977 Texas A&M University study found sufficient demand for commuter rail service, estimating a volume of 1.2 million passenger trips per year, with revenues covering as much as 90% of costs, if the service were operating now.

The triple-track railroad would use a right-of-way 90 feet wide; the tollway would require widths varying between 185 and 360 feet. Two major expressways closely parallel the route of the proposed tollway.

Amtrak could benefit greatly from the rail proposal. This line is part of the Longview-Houston route which NARP believes the "Inter-American's" Houston section should use. In addition, if Dallas-Houston passenger service is restored on the most direct route—Fort Worth and Denver—trains could use the MP corridor for the first 23 miles north from Houston.

Eckhardt's proposal would also help MP: added tracks would increase operating capacity and flexibility and the elimination of major grade crossings would mean faster, safer freight trains.

In opposing the tollway, Eckhardt recently stated: "Last year's gasoline shortage should have taught us a very plain lesson—we can no longer depend totally upon the automobile as a transportation source if our area is to continue to grow and thrive. Auto dependence has already gone too far in the Houston area, resulting in increased air pollution, wasteful energy use, congested highways, increased runoff and flooding; and aesthetic blight. Many would choose not to drive if only they were given a reliable alternative, and we here today are expressing our firm support for the rail alternative."

At an April 2 Washington press conference with Texas Reps. Bob Eckhardt and Phil Gramm, Texas Railroad Commissioner John H. Poerner said development of Amtrak's Texas Triangle rail corridors can and should be expedited through state involvement. As a first step, Poerner said he will seek state funds necessary to obtain Amtrak 403(B) trains for the Triangle. Eventually, Poerner hopes to see conventional trains supplanted by 100 + mph Bullet Trains.

The Texas Railroad Commission is currently preparing a study of the state's rail passenger potential at the request of Governor William Clements.

Amtrak Orders New Cars

Amtrak announced on Mar. 12 that it had signed a letter of intent to The Budd Company ordering 150 new stainless steel passenger cars for about \$1 million per car. The first car is due for delivery in early Sept., 1981, with the entire order to be completed "10 months later" (July, 1982).

President Carter, however, wants to set back the start of deliveries by two months to help make the Fiscal Year 1981 budget cut look more significant. This symbolic act threatens Amtrak's ability to provide a decent New York-Florida service during the winter of 1981-2. The new cars are primarily for that route which of course hits a major peak in the winter.

The body shells for the new cars will be Amfleet-style, but the windows will be taller (going down 3" lower and rising 1" higher compared with existing Amfleet windows) and the cars will have vestibules at one end only. The latter feature will permit 57 seats with the distance between seats 5" greater than in the 60-seat Amcoaches now used on some long-distance trains. (For the technically minded: there will be a 51" pitch instead of 46".)

The order will include 125 coaches and 25 food service cars. They will be operated with older sleeping and dining cars converted to electric heating/air-conditioning. Amtrak chose the

Amfleet body style because the cars could be delivered fastest and Amtrak attaches a high priority to ending the use of steam heat and obsolete air-conditioning. With these cars on the Florida and NY-New Orleans routes, and Superliners (hopefully) in place on the Western long-distance trains, Amtrak's objective may be achieved by the fall of 1982.

WHILE AMTRAK DOMES COLLECT DUST. . .

"It's pretty here. We ought to put a super dome on for the foliage season."

—A U.S. DOT official on the Jan. 25 New Hampshire inaugural run, quoted in the Jan. 26 Nashua Telegraph

The new Budd order does **not** constitute the 200 low-level cars touted in the Oct. News. Amtrak hopes by Oct. 1 to let a contract for construction of two "preproduction" trainsets of "real" low-level long-distance cars. Amtrak prefers the term "preproduction" instead of "prototype" to emphasize the great extent to which it expects to rely on successful aspects of earlier car designs and to kill the notion that it is going to "reinvent the wheel." Lessons drawn from operation of these cars would then be incorporated into production line cars.

Congratulations to NARP Director Lorena F. Lemons who is now Conrail monitoring coordinator (computer services) for the U.S. Railway Association, and to Thomas R. Pulsifer, President of the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers, who is now chairman of the Ohio Rail Transportation Authority.

To bring up-to-date the maintenance on old steam-heated cars which was deferred before the disastrous delays in Superliner deliveries became known, Amtrak has signed contracts with Morrison-Knudsen, Inc., and Railway Services Corporation, a new subsidiary of the Auto-Train Corporation, to refurbish and overhaul up to 175 passenger cars. M-K will overhaul 50 cars with an option on up to 75 others at its shops in Boise, ID; cost of the entire 50-car job, to be done at Sanford, FL, would be about \$4 million.

Amtrak is discussing with other companies the possibility of similar overhauls of additional cars of all types. This work cannot be done at Amtrak's Beech Grove, IN, facility or the Santa Fe's Topeka, KS, shops which are working at full capacity on converting the best conventional cars to all-electric heating and air conditioning.

THE "HATTIE B." OF PHOENIX: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

The Phoenix commuter train, nicknamed after the wife of Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt, ceased operation Friday, Mar. 7, after ten weekdays of operation during which it handled about 46,000 passenger trips. The reopening of the Maricopa Freeway bridge on Mar. 3 reduced the need for the train.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency paid 80% of the net cost of providing the train service and the State of Arizona paid 20%. (The Feb. News implied that Arizona had paid 100%.) Fares were \$1 per ride.

Studies are underway about the possibility of making the service permanent, including an investigation of whether large employers would be willing to help subsidize the trains instead of paying for employee parking.

There is also pressure for Phoenix-Tucson service. As reported in the Mar. 10 Scottsdale Daily Progress, "Long-term advocates of improved rail service, members of the Rail Passengers Association of the Southwest, are heartened by the sudden government interest in trains after years of having their pleas fall on deaf ears.

"Charles Montooth (a NARP director, ed.), an RPAS director, said the group met with three state senators, a member of Gov. Babbitt's staff and officials with the state Transportation Department Friday to discuss the group's proposal of daily Phoenix to Tucson train service with a stop in Mesa."

THE BUS CONNECTION

Good Service, Good Politics

"The concept of intermodal public transportation continues to receive much study, as one avenue towards the rationalization of national transportation policy. It would seem obvious to most passengers that the various forms of ground transportation could benefit from interconnecting service, with each mode serving as a feeder to the other mode. The public benefits from intermodal connections and service because the availability and ease of travel aboard public transportation is enhanced."

—The Crossing (Arkansas Association of Railroad Passengers Newsletter), Jan.-Feb. 1980

A British Rail manager once told me that the letters from the general public which he takes most seriously are those in which the writer suggests improvements that would benefit someone other than the writer. Such letters undoubtedly attract special attention partly because of their rarity.

There is a corollary to that principle for rail passenger advocates: you can enhance your credibility and further your cause more effectively by playing up your support for intercity bus service and better rail-bus coordination.

On two recent occasions, I found that public officials showed an above-average interest in my testimony when I demonstrated knowledge about and support for intercity bus operations. These officials are constantly inundated with boring, predictable testimony from representatives of umpteen incarnations of the National Association of Widgets explaining why the country needs more widgets and what the government should do to facilitate—or pay for—the proliferation of widgets. So it's not surprising that some ears perk up when a NARP witness has kind words for buses—particularly in light of the harsh words the bus people usually have for passenger trains.

(Of course, it's also helpful if your presentation has the effect of laying to rest the image of the rail passenger advocate as a naive "fan" with little knowledge or interest in anything outside the technical details of railroading.)

On Jan. 23, at the request of NARP Director John DeLora who was out of state, I appeared before the Michigan Transportation Commission to support continuation and expansion of Michigan's public transportation program in general and funding of Amtrak trains in particular. I followed a bus company representative who explained why buses are better than trains and probably should replace at least the state-supported Amtrak trains in Michigan.

I told the commissioners that I had just ridden from Washington to Lansing on the bus—possibly the first witness they had heard confess to taking a 590-mile bus trip. I commended them for the state's pioneering role in aiding intercity bus service, which includes some operating subsidies, intermodal terminals, and loans for purchase of new buses.

But I pointed out that buses cannot do the job alone because (a) many people won't ride them and (b) many people will tolerate buses only for short distances—and many all-automobile or

that Amtrak is bringing business to bus companies. The Amtrak-bus relationship is a "two-way street," but the American Bus Association doesn't talk about the aspect just mentioned.

It appears my message was seriously considered. Michigan rail passenger advocates have noticed, since my visit, that they are treated with even greater respect by the new members of the Transportation Commission.

On Feb. 29, I testified before the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Surface Transportation at its hearing on new Northeast Corridor funding. Subcommittee Chairman Russell B. Long (D-LA) showed more interest in my testimony than in the past, and it appears that my emphasis on rail-bus cooperation was a major reason.

I criticized a plan for Providence which would increase the distance between entrances to the rail and bus terminals from 600 to 2,300 feet. I supported creation of an intermodal terminal in Washington by locating Greyhound and Trailways at Union Station.

The rail-bus issue figured prominently in the ensuing dialogue between Senator Long and myself. He asked me to elaborate on my support for the creation of an intermodal facility at Washington Union Station, and reaffirmed his sympathy with the idea. The single question which he submitted to me in writing also dealt with the rail-bus question:

"You express your concerns that the Providence rail station may be moved and therefore make bus/rail transfers more difficult. But the bus industry has objected to the whole Northeast Corridor Project and to Amtrak in general as being subsidized predatory competition. Since you are evidently concerned about both bus and rail passengers, how would you respond to that criticism of Amtrak?"

Here is the full text of the reply I submitted:

"The short answer is that I believe current subsidies to Amtrak constitute a sort of 'affirmative action' program to help restore a proper balance in the U.S. transport system—a balance which was lost a few decades ago as a result of major public investment programs in all non-rail modes. Even where 'user taxes' cover the public costs of a particular mode, the effect of having the government act as 'banker' for one mode and not another is that of subsidy. (Furthermore, highway users have never paid their full costs if you include traffic control, police department, pollution, and real estate tax costs.)

"I believe the basic thrust of the bus industry objection which you cited should be discounted because it is inconsistent with the welfare of both the bus companies and the general public. This is not to defend every penny Amtrak spends, or to oppose more efficient labor utilization such as Amtrak has recently negotiated for the Oakland-Bakersfield and the prospective Chicago-Peoria services.

"But it appears that Amtrak—with good intermodal terminals and institutional cooperation—would feed more passengers to connecting bus routes than it would divert from paralleling routes. The fundamental reality is that few people are willing to take long bus trips. For example, I was recently one of two passengers on a convenient mid-afternoon departure from Pittsburgh to Cleveland, where Amtrak has no competing service. But many—if not most—people would make short bus trips to connect with trains.

"In my testimony, I referred to Frederick, MD, as a non-rail community where Greyhound ridership would rise if Washington had an intermodal terminal. Greyhound's economics would be improved not only because of increased ridership, but because the intermodal riders would not be concentrated on the Washington rush hour buses. Many of the riders connecting from Amtrak would be off-peak, or counter-flow, riders filling bus seats that are now empty. This is because most Amtrak long-distance passengers arrive Washington in the morning and depart in the evening. This principle would apply also to the Washington-Annapolis run and to similar bus runs around the nation.

"Amtrak would even attract some riders to paralleling bus routes, for example, when a wouldbe rail passenger takes a bus for a segment of his trip because of scheduling convenience. Since buses are ideal for low-volume movements, they will always offer more schedule choices during weak travel hours. Between

Bumper stickers declaring "WE'D RATHER BE ON THE TRAIN" are now available from Moksrail, P.O. Box 1192, Kansas City, MO 64141. Price: \$1 each (2 for \$1.75).



train-automobile trips made by these people would be rail-bus trips if convenient, safe rail-bus transfer opportunities were provided.

Consequently, where such opportunities already exist, I noted

9:01 PM and 6:29 AM, for example, Amtrak has only one departure from New York to Washington but Greyhound alone has six.

"Amtrak also helps the bus companies by providing, in effect, free advertising for their services. Amtrak's widely distributed national timetable is filled with schedules of connecting bus services showing the name of the carrier (particularly helpful for small bus firms whose names may never appear outside their regions except in the guides used by ticket agents).

"The public interest would best be served by providing the most attractive practical alternative to use of the private automobile both for commuter and intercity travel. The flexibility of the auto is perhaps its greatest attraction. Public transport may never provide the same flexibility; it can offer much more flexibility than at present. The creation of intermodal terminals is an important element in this effort.

"While the American Bus Association protests public funding of Amtrak, the ABA is a bit removed from day-to-day farebox realities. Operating bus companies are generally quick to recognize the advantages of intermodal service. Over the past decade, the number of regular-route intercity buses stopping at both airports and railroad stations has dramatically increased. I have yet to encounter an official of an operating bus company who objected to a specific opportunity to get into a joint terminal with Amtrak. I recently spent a few hours in the Providence railroad station and saw why.

"A woman missed an evening train for New York by a few minutes. I saw her problem and showed her my bus schedule, pointing out a Greyhound departure in about 15 minutes. The next train wasn't scheduled for more than 3½ hours and it would arrive New York at 3:13 AM. She took the bus.

"Later the same evening, two students trying to reach Brandeis University near Boston came in. I happened to have the Boston-Brandeis schedule. Armed with the information that there was a 12:10 AM train from Boston to Brandeis, the students decided to make the trip even though it was late at night. To get from Providence to Boston, however, they had to use the hourly Bonanza express bus service because no Amtrak train would get them to Boston in time for their connection.

"In both of the above cases, people came first to the train station hoping and expecting to use the train, but readily switched to the bus when they found that necessary. These are simply the two cases I overheard while waiting for my train. Undoubtedly other people dealt only with the ticket agent, and the average volume of passengers so diverted is probably higher than what I witnessed during a light travel time (Saturday night).

"In conclusion, the bus industry attitude as you have stated it reflects a lack of understanding of the immediate willingness of the public to respond to a better-coordinated intercity transport network. Perhaps more important, the attitude reflects a lack of awareness that our nation of energy gluttons, to use your apt phrase, is rapidly approaching a time when it will need every bit of well-planned public transport capacity it can provide—and more. As the price of gasoline and new cars continues to increase, so will the readiness of the public to tolerate such activities as changing between bus and train at pleasant intermodal terminals."

—Ross Capon

House Helps; Carter Cuts *(Cont. from p. 1)*

sary before other railroads would acquire pieces of the Rock Island, which ceased operation Mar. 23.)

House Subcommittee Chairman James J. Florio (D-NJ) was expected to be hit with strong conflicting pressures—on the one hand, his Senate counterparts along with Rock Island freight customers and rail labor would be pressing for fast action on the labor protection language alone; on the other hand, House colleagues anxious for emerging corridors work, some of them already miffed at the "reauthorization" hurdle placed ahead of track construction, would be urging that the package be kept together. Emerging corridors advocates considered it essential, at a minimum, to maintain the linkage between the Northeast Corridor and emerging corridors provisions; if the NEC funding was passed alone, the emerging corridor hopes would be dead.

Meanwhile, the White House was busy proving what many

NARP members have already figured out: no matter who is in the White House, passenger train improvements consist of whatever Congress is willing to force through. There were the verbal attacks on emerging corridors by Secretary Goldschmidt. And there was the revised budget submitted by the Administration six days after the New York and Connecticut primaries and, according to Congressional leaders, probably too late to supersede the plans already developed in Congressional committees.

The ordered cuts include:

- \$75 million worth of budget authority, which translates into \$50 million worth of outlays, for Northeast Corridor improvements to be postponed;

- \$50 million of the new Budd order (see "Amtrak Orders New Cars") to be postponed. Since Amtrak authorizations are tied to specific years, this really means a permanent loss of \$50 million, unless Congress chooses to add a compensating \$50 million (plus inflation!) in a future year.

As the White House was preparing to release the above cut recommendations, the House Budget Committee approved cuts roughly paralleling the President's as regards transportation but letting the appropriations committee decide exactly how the cuts should be distributed.

But the Senate Budget Committee mauled Amtrak even more ferociously than did President Carter. The President's budget submitted in January called for a total of \$975 million for Amtrak in FY '81. The Senate Budget Committee adopted the "Chairman's mark" for Amtrak, the chairman being Amtrak opponent Edmund S. Muskie (D-ME): \$760 million in budget authority (and only \$660 million in outlays as a result of a complex maneuver which would require Amtrak to obtain its capital monies as needed instead of quarterly).

You can put \$760 million in perspective by noting that this is the figure Former Transportation Secretary Brock Adams originally recommended for FY 1980 to accompany his 43% reduction in route mileage! Senate Budget now proposes the same figure for a system that was cut less than 14% and after one year's worth of inflation has eaten into the value of the dollar.

To top it off, the Committee would cut \$105 million in Northeast Corridor money as well.

The Committee did vote down an amendment offered by William L. Armstrong (R-CO) which would have virtually eliminated Federal support for Amtrak.

Needless to say, we hope that House Budget conferees will insist that these drastic cuts be eliminated, and that the appropriations committees will stand firm by Amtrak.

WINDFALL TAX ENACTED—BUT WHO GETS THE MONEY?

On April 2, President Carter signed the "Crude Oil Windfall Profit Tax Act of 1980" into law. It imposes over the next ten years a tax on the recently-decontrolled U.S. oil industry that is expected to yield from \$227 to \$410 billion to be spent as follows: 60% for federal income tax reductions, 25% for assistance to low-income households, and 15% (at least \$34 billion) for "energy and transportation spending programs."

It seems clear that a large portion of the latter category will go to mass transit. Hopes that the railroad industry and Amtrak in particular may be aided by revenues from this tax stem from Senate passage last November of an amendment by Sen. George McGovern (D-SD) reserving \$1 billion of windfall revenues for railroads, of which \$340 million was earmarked for Amtrak.

The catch is that the allocations in the act are advisory only, and all money spent on the various supposed beneficiaries of the act must go through the normal authorizing and appropriating committees. There is thus no guarantee, for example, that Amtrak will get any more money than it would have gotten without the oil tax.

Although the McGovern amendment was dropped in the House-Senate conference, the general reference to transportation quoted above was included. Special thanks to Sen. McGovern for his efforts, and to Sens. Bob Dole (R-KS) and Gaylord Nelson (D-WI) who fought in conference to keep rail assistance included in the final bill.
