



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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(Vol. 12, No. 11 was mailed Jan. 3)

RETURN REQUESTED

CUT ROUTES 43%, \$'s ONLY 11%

"The Carter Administration has a curious order of priorities in transportation. . . . Granted that money can't be spread around as if it's going out of style or it will go out of style, what sense does it make to spend less in the potentially most energy-efficient mode of transportation, the rails, while spending more on the most energy-wasteful, highways?"

"If, as Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams declares, (Amtrak's) deficits have been too high, this is largely because investment has been too low. . . ."

"Investment goes into highways. That becomes automatic, since highways are financed by a trust fund constantly infused with gasoline taxes. Yet imagine where the American railroads might be today if, years ago, they had benefited from a similar arrangement."

"The Carter budget cuts are designed to slow inflation. Yet that inflation is fueled by our imports of foreign oil at prices set by the cartel. The U.S. will have to pay that price and bear that burden so long as it puts the brakes on trains and hits the accelerator on automobiles."

—*The Phila. Inquirer* editorial, Jan. 30

On the day Secretary of Energy James Schlesinger announced that banning Sunday gasoline sales was under consideration, Transportation Secretary Brock Adams took a Metroliner to New York's Pennsylvania Station to propose what *The Washington Post* accurately labeled the dismembering of Amtrak.

Congress asked the Secretary to define "an optimal intercity railroad passenger system, based upon current and future market and population requirements." Secretary Adams answered in effect, "Here's what you can do for what the President is willing to give you." Or, in his own words before a House Appropriations subcommittee, "We picked the highest volume routes we could find up to the point we ran out of money." He indicated the "Crescent" and "Montrealer" were the last two trains that "fell out."

The President is willing to give Amtrak \$552 million for operations, and an overall total of \$760 million, of which 9% (\$69 million) would pay employees to do nothing—labor protection payments as a result of jobs lost under the recommended plan. A 12.7% cut in Amtrak's FY 1980 budget is forcing a 43% cut in route miles served, plus service frequency reductions on 19% of the surviving route miles. (See budget box on page 2.)

If the Secretary's plan is approved, starting October 1 there would be no rail passenger service to such urban areas as Dallas/Ft. Worth, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Columbus,

Amtrak Outlook Bright —If You Write and Ride!

Prospects are good for saving virtually all Amtrak services this year, and the quality of that service is likely to improve dramatically if Amtrak survives 1979 intact.

Amtrak's survival will depend on your willingness to write to your Representatives and Senators and tell them you think Amtrak should be expanded, not cut back. Ask them to work and vote for such an effort, including a resolution to disapprove the truncated DOT plan. (Their addresses: The Honorable _____, House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; The Honorable _____, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510.) NARP has written to all of the members of Congress, but it is essential that they hear from their own constituents . . . from you.

Action is needed now. Although the "90 calendar days of continuous session" deadline for a resolution of disapproval is on or about May 15, committee hearings are already under way.

Try to keep your letters to a concise single page, and put your specific request regarding the disapproval resolution at or near the beginning. If your own state or district is not adversely affected, point out this plan lays the groundwork for future cutbacks because overhead costs will not decline proportionately

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LATE FLASH!—Rep. James J. Florio, chairman of the House subcommittee that approves Amtrak authorizations, may try to add routes to the DOT map in the authorization bill instead of through a resolution of disapproval. He envisions representatives who want to have service on routes not in the DOT plan coming before his subcommittee and making the cases for such routes. The subcommittee would consider the requests and include in the authorization the money and requirement to operate those routes it finds having merit. Thus your letters to representatives should include justifications for keeping the threatened route(s) serving your area or state.

Louisville, Dayton, and Birmingham. These states would lose all rail passenger service: Alabama, Arkansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Vermont. These states would have only token service: Arizona/New Mexico/Texas (the tri-weekly "Sunset"); Georgia (Savannah); Idaho (Sandpoint); Indiana (South Bend); Iowa (Ft. Madison); Kentucky (Fulton); Ohio (Cleveland, Toledo); Tennessee (Memphis); and West Virginia (Martinsburg, Harpers Ferry). Thirty of the 100 largest metropolitan areas would have no service.

In the face of a 43% cut in route miles nationwide Nevada is the only state which would emerge with more service than it now has,

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The DOT Plan

SERVICE FREQUENCY REDUCTIONS PROPOSED BY DOT
(Numbers show present and proposed round trips per day)

- New York-Pittsburgh (2-1)
- New York-Florida (3-1; NY-Savannah "Palmetto" unaffected)
- Chicago-Kansas City (2-1)
- Seattle-Portland (3-1)
- Washington-Richmond (6-3)
- Washington-Martinsburg, WV (2-1 weekdays; no change weekends)
- Chicago-Minneapolis (would drop from twice daily to once daily plus a second train tri-weekly off-peak and daily during the peak; during off-peak, for the first time, there would be no daylight service here)

● Minneapolis-Fargo-Spokane-Seattle (service at these cities would drop from daily to tri-weekly off-peak; service at intermediate points on the "Empire Builder" route via Minot and Yakima would drop from 4 times/week to tri-weekly off-peak but increase to daily during peaks, which are Memorial Day to Labor Day, Thanksgiving week, and two weeks around Christmas.)

ROUTE ELIMINATIONS PROPOSED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN DOT'S FINAL REPORT (Segments in parentheses would retain some service)

- "Southwest Ltd.": Los Angeles-Flagstaff for Grand Canyon-Albuquerque-(Kansas City-Chicago)
- "San Joaquin": Oakland-Stockton-Fresno-Bakersfield
- "Lone Star": Houston-and Dallas-Ft. Worth-Oklahoma City-Wichita-(Kansas City-Chicago)
- "National Limited": Kansas City-St. Louis-Indianapolis-Dayton-Columbus-(Pittsburgh-New York)
- "Crescent": New Orleans-Meridian, MS-Birmingham-Atlanta-Greenville, SC-Charlotte, NC-Greensboro, NC-Lynchburg, VA-Charlottesville-Washington
- "Montrealer": Montreal-Burlington Jct.-Brattleboro-Norhampton, MA-(Springfield-Hartford-New York-Washington)
- "Cardinal": Chicago-Richmond, IN-Cincinnati-Charleston, WV-White Sulphur Springs, WV-Charlottesville-Washington, DC
- St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Wildwood, Ocala, and Waldo (for Gainesville), FL
- "Broadway Limited" west of Pittsburgh would no longer run via Fort Wayne, IN-Lima, OH-Canton, OH; Washington section would no longer run via central Pennsylvania, Harrisburg and Paoli
- "Lake Shore Limited" west of Buffalo would no longer run via Erie, PA-(Cleveland-Chicago)

ROUTE ELIMINATIONS PROPOSED BY DOT IN MAY, 1978, AND PROPOSED IN FINAL DOT REPORT:

- "Pioneer": (Seattle-Portland)-Boise-Pocatello-(Ogden-Salt

Lake City)

- "San Francisco Zephyr" east of Denver would no longer run via Lincoln-Omaha-Ottumwa, IA-Burlington, IA
- "Inter-American": Laredo-San Antonio-Austin-Ft. Worth-Dallas-Little Rock-(St. Louis-Chicago)
- "Floridian": Chicago-Louisville-Nashville-Florida
- "North Coast Hiawatha": Chicago-Seattle via southern Montana and Wenatchee, WA
- "Pacific International": Seattle-Vancouver
- "Shenandoah": Cincinnati-Parkersburg, WV-(Cumberland, MD-Martinsburg, WV-Washington)
- "Hilltopper": Ashland, KY-Bluefield, WV-Roanoke-Lynchburg-Washington

NEW SERVICES PROPOSED BY DOT

- Los Angeles-Las Vegas-Salt Lake City-Ogden, UT section of "San Francisco Zephyr", adding 277 miles to the Chicago-LA trip;
- Denver-Kansas City-Chicago reroute of "San Francisco Zephyr", using the UP Denver-KC
- Pittsburgh-Cumberland, MD-Washington reroute of Washington section of "Broadway Ltd."
- Pittsburgh-Chicago reroute of "Broadway Ltd." via Cleveland and Toledo
- Buffalo-Detroit-Chicago reroute of "Lake Shore Ltd.", using trackage over which the daylight "Niagara Rainbow" was discontinued Jan. 31 but, "to avoid delays caused by customs formalities, the train should operate on a 'closed door' basis through Canada."

A FINAL NOTE FROM THE SECRETARY: "I have only recommended the end points and principal intermediate points to be served by the new system. The specific routings between those points . . . are not required by law, and should be viewed by Amtrak as advisory."

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

President Carter's \$531.6 billion budget for FY 1980 falls only \$97 million short of what is needed to keep Amtrak's services operating. The budget proposes:

- \$552 million for operations (DOT says the present system would require \$718 million);
- \$69 million for labor protection payments to employees displaced by service cutbacks DOT proposed;
- \$25 million for retiring loans;
- \$12 million for the final installment in the purchase of the Northeast Corridor from Conrail;
- \$102 million for capital improvements, including work needed to implement the "new" system DOT proposes.

The budget itself specified \$55 million for labor protection and \$116 million for capital improvements, but the more recent DOT plan estimates \$69 million for the former and we adjusted the capital improvements downward accordingly. Some reports show everything except operations as "capital", trying to create the illusion that the capital program is bigger.

NARP members, including a few with signs ("Save Our Trains!"), came from as far as Harrisburg, PA, to watch the Secretary's press conference at New York's Penn Station. NARP's Ross Capon was interviewed by several radio and television stations immediately after the conference.

The day after Adams' conference, NARP held its own at the National Press Building in Washington. NARP's analysis of the DOT plan was distributed. NARP Director John Martin of Atlanta, and Ross Capon, fielded the questions of several reporters from both the trade and general media. Portions of the conference were carried nationally that evening on ABC and Mutual radio stations and on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" and the Washington, DC, CBS-TV station. NARP's Joe Zucker was interviewed on Voice of America, and on Panorama, a popular television program in Washington, DC, which also goes via cable to Virginia and the Carolinas.

The NARP office has received an unprecedented volume of calls from reporters since release of the DOT plan.

Amtrak Outlook (continued from page 1)

to service reductions and surviving services will be even more vulnerable to attack in the future.

Try to generate similar pressure from your governor, mayor, city council or board of aldermen, chamber of commerce, and state legislators. Reach other individual citizens through word-of-mouth, radio and TV talk shows, and letters to the editor. Visit the editorial department of your local newspaper if that is necessary to get it to take a positive stand. Don't hesitate to telephone or write NARP if you need help in answering counter-arguments.

Under the law, if either the House or the Senate passes such a resolution, the Secretary must submit a revised recommendation within 45 days. With enough constituent pressure, the House might well pass a resolution of disapproval, forcing DOT to come up with a new plan. However, if the Senate also passed a resolution, the Administration would be startled, and would be much more likely to revise its plan in an acceptable manner.

Initial reaction from Capitol Hill was restrained. Clearly, most of the pressures within Washington, especially on members of President Carter's own party, are to support the DOT plan.

But resolutions of disapproval were circulating in Congress the day after the plan was announced. Senate Resolution 49 was introduced by Max Baucus (D-MT), Jennings Randolph (D-WV), and Harrison Schmitt (R-NM). On the House side, Rep. Nick Joe Rahall (D-WV) introduced House Resolution 93 and had 14 co-

DOT is out of copies of its Final Report until early March. To order a copy, send mailing label to Amtrak Route Study RFA-20, 400 7th St., SW, Room 5415, Washington, DC 20590. Or send \$2 (checks preferred) and mailing label to NARP and we will mail your copy 1st class the day we get the reports.

On Feb. 2, Greyhound's new President, Frank L. Nageotte, told Secy. Adams "I have today instructed my top staff to immediately study Greyhound's service in areas where Amtrak service would be curtailed to determine how we can broaden our service and improve intermodal arrangements between Amtrak and Greyhound to assure quality transportation in those areas. Within 30 days we intend to make a formal proposal for extensive intermodal cooperation between Greyhound and Amtrak."

sponsors by Feb. 5, with three others planning to introduce resolutions of their own.

As others get a chance to become more familiar with the plan—with the help of letters from you—we expect to get a majority vote of disapproval in the House, and hope to get one in the Senate.

If we fail to defeat DOT, the future of Amtrak would be bleak. Per passenger subsidies on the surviving services would rise, and railroads will have more incentive to provide lousy service, noting with interest that the likes of Missouri Pacific were rewarded for bad performance by finally being relieved of Amtrak.

The American people have been trying to send a message to Congress for a long time. This message has come in the form of increased train ridership where decent service has been provided (and even in many places with bad service); public opinion polls taken for both DOT and Amtrak; testimony at RSPO hearings; continued pressure on legislators; and more bona fide state requests for "403(b)" (50% state supported) trains than Amtrak has money to run. The Congress has done its best to respond to this message, but is getting tired of having to drag one White House after another along.

If Amtrak survives this year of intense tax-cut fever, chances are good that the Administration and the railroad companies will finally accept this message: the U.S. needs a modern nationwide rail passenger system.

They might even respond by devoting their energies to helping Amtrak succeed instead of trying to kill it. It is tantalizing to imagine where Amtrak might be if the White House and the railroad industry had been acting on this assumption since 1970!

You can also help by continuing to ride the trains whenever possible, and reminding friends that all trains will continue to run at least until October 1.

CRESCENT NOW DAILY ALL THE WAY

From the Feb. 1 Amtrak takeover, service west of Atlanta on the Washington-New Orleans "Crescent" (formerly "Southern Crescent") was increased from tri-weekly to daily. Through coaches and sleepers continue to and from New York, as does the tri-weekly NY-Los Angeles sleeper with overnight stopover in New Orleans.

To provide the increased service, Amtrak saved \$200,000/year by not using the Atlanta coach yards and eliminating all switching of the train in Atlanta which meant ending the SR's Atlanta-New Orleans dome service and the DC-Atlanta "master room car". Amtrak has also consolidated stations in Birmingham, where the "Crescent" will share the downtown station with the "Floridian", and in Charlottesville, VA, where the "Cardinal" will also use the SR station.

Rep. James J. Florio (D-Camden, NJ) is the new chairman of the House Interstate & Foreign Commerce Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce; his new staff director is Clifford Elkins, formerly with the National Conference of State Railway Officials and, before that, with NY DOT. Rep. Robert Duncan (D-Portland, OR) is the new chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation.

SOUTH SHORE LINE AT CRUCIAL STAGE

The Indiana General Assembly will apparently decide the future of Chicago-South Bend passenger service in its current session. In 1977, the ICC rejected the electric commuter railroad's application to discontinue passenger service to give Indiana public officials time to find a way to provide operating assistance to the line.

It now appears the state legislature, under HB 1192, may use an existing tax on rail freight rolling stock which now goes into general revenues. The proceeds from this tax would be diverted to the commuter transportation district in northern Indiana. It is not known if Conrail's two Chicago-Valparaiso locals (still operating as of Feb. 6) would be eligible for similar assistance.

Indiana NARP members should write their legislators in Indianapolis urging them to solve the South Shore problem this session. Stress its economic value in terms of payroll and the loss to northern Indiana if the electric trains cease.

At a Jan. 19 press conference, Secy. Adams announced completion of the Northeast Corridor project would probably be the end of 1983 instead of 1981, and the cost of improving the service will be \$654 million more than originally authorized, for a new total of \$2.4 billion.

Regional Meetings

The meetings listed here were set after our last newsletter was published. Please see November and December issues of the News for candidates and other meetings; regional boundaries are shown in the November issue.

II. Sat., Mar. 31, Amtrak Turboliner Facility, Rensselaer, within walking distance of the "Albany-Rensselaer" station. NOON checkin and tour of facility; 1:30 business meeting. If you plan to come, please notify G.J. Gerard, 75 First Ave., Gloversville, NY 12078 (phone 518/773-7168).

III. Sat., Mar. 24, 10 AM and 2 PM, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 1819 JFK Blvd. (3rd floor), in downtown Philadelphia, 1½ blocks west of Suburban Station.

IV. Sat., Mar. 17 (note new date), 10 AM at the home of Lorena Lemons, 14653 Tynewick Terrace, Silver Spring, MD, about a \$4 cab ride (flat rate irrespective of number of people) from the Silver Spring Metrorail station. Lunch will be served afterwards; contributions of food welcome. If you plan to come, please call the NARP office.

V. Sat., Mar. 31 (10-5) and Sun. Apr. 1 (NOON-5—, Riviera Hyatt House, 1630 Peachtree St., NW, Atlanta 30309, 1 block S. of the railroad station. Hotel rooms are \$26 single and \$32 double plus 7% tax.

Cut Routes (continued from page 1)

since the "Southwest Ltd." has been dropped in favor of a Los Angeles-Las Vegas-Salt Lake City leg of the "San Francisco Zephyr".

Secretary Adams claims his proposed system would "be used more intensively by its customers" at the same time he advocates reducing service frequency on 2,985 of the 15,700 miles in his system. Even the 15,700 mile figure is questionable, since it depends on all existing state subsidies continuing. If the plan is implemented, however, the costs of some "403(b)" services may rise to the point states are not willing to continue them. For example, the Chicago-Quincy "Illinois Zephyr" would become the sole Amtrak train on the BN in Illinois.

In light of the recommended frequency cuts, perhaps the most telling indictments of the plan came from Amtrak itself—significant since Amtrak's President Alan Boyd is effectively an Adams appointee.

- In an "Amtrak Perspective" on the DOT report, Amtrak said, "if (the route restructuring process) leads to still inadequate service over a smaller system, then the public will not be well served."

- Amtrak noted that its Board "has adopted a policy that daily train service is the minimum service that should be offered the traveling public," but the report recommends tri-weekly service on two major routes ("Sunset" and "Empire Builder").

- The DOT report professes to leave certain decisions—including service frequency—up to management, but Amtrak claims "the system recommended in conjunction with the funding provided effectively eliminates that flexibility".

Secretary Adams' claim that "there will be only a 9% decrease in ridership" is unsupported, since neither Amtrak nor DOT has the data needed to predict the impact of the proposed discontinuances on the remaining services. They do not know, for example, what would happen on the "Sunset Ltd." without its connections to Dallas/Ft. Worth and, via the "Crescent", to the Northeast.

The 9% figure is also misleading because it compares with

"The final recommendations . . . represented a marked improvement—from a congressional point of view. . . . (The preliminary) plan, for example, dropped all passenger train service to Nevada, the home state of Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Howard W. Cannon and to West Virginia (sic), the home state of House Commerce Chairman Harley O. Staggers. . . . The Jan. 31 plan, on the other hand, proposed to retain a restructured Washington, DC-Cincinnati run (sic) that traversed West Virginia; continue weekend service to Martinsburg, WV; and preserve service to Reno, NV. The plan even recommended adding a route serving Las Vegas, which has not enjoyed regular passenger rail service since 1968."

—Congressional Quarterly, Feb. 3

existing ridership and not with the dramatically increased ridership which would occur if the system were left intact while the major capital investments already approved (in some cases, already paid for) go in place over the next several months: new superliners for the Western trains, newly electrified cars for the East, and new all-weather maintenance facilities in Chicago.

It is clear, however, that overhead costs would not decline in proportion to service costs and, therefore, the subsidy per passenger would be higher than if something like "Scenario E" of last May were implemented. DOT itself found that this scenario, the largest of the five it considered and roughly the size of the present system, would require a lower subsidy per passenger mile than any of the smaller systems examined.

It is also clear that DOT wants very stiff surcharges to be imposed on routes where capacity would be cut back, notably New York-Florida and Chicago-West Coast. This, of course, would mean that the average income of passengers who stayed with Amtrak would go up.

Thus, in three ways, implementing the DOT plan would lay the groundwork for the future elimination of service outside the Northeast Corridor:

- as the system contracted, economies of scale would be lost, more stations would have 100% of their costs assigned to individual trains, and the deficit per passenger would rise;

- the more limited service would become irrelevant for large numbers of people and members of Congress, making funding of the weaker system more difficult;

- as fares went up, poor people would be driven off the trains, and Amtrak would be attacked as a "subsidy for the rich".

There is ample evidence within the DOT report that the route structure is not Amtrak's fundamental problem. The report notes that on-time performance has declined from 1972 to 1978; that various locomotive problems forced train cancellations and slower-than-necessary schedules; and that severe maintenance problems increased the percentage of equipment out of service in 1977. The report acknowledges that "heating and air-conditioning failures . . . were a major source of discomfort to Amtrak's passengers in its early years." However, it does not acknowledge that such problems have continued to worsen on most of the long-distance routes DOT wants to kill. On the contrary, it implies these problems were solved a few years ago.

Amtrak's problem is that it is only beginning to get the tools it needs to test the market. DOT's glossing over of this is particularly misleading in light of the successes where good service has been provided, and the facts that, as noted above, some key tools will arrive within months.

Los Angeles-San Diego ridership jumped 142% from 1973 to FY 1978, though frequency of service rose only 87½%. The best ridership comparison from FY '77 to '78 for a long-distance train was turned in by one of the few such trains running with new equipment—the Chicago-New Orleans "Panama"—even though its on-time performance was bad.

The Adams plan comes at a time when Energy Department officials are seriously worried about gasoline supplies as a result of the crisis in Iran. *The Washington Star* reported on Feb. 5 that 4.8 billion gas rationing stamps were removed from mothballs and serial numbers will be printed on them. The Japanese government has asked motorists to cut driving by 20% and stay off freeways on holidays. The West German Finance Minister was quoted in the Jan. 31 *New York Times* as saying that a stable U.S. dollar required attacking "the causes of dollar weakness, stop the inflation, and reduce oil imports and oil consumption. . . . We let our oil prices rise, and we checked inflation at the same time."

U.S. oil supplies could be further stretched by the activation of agreements to supply other Western nations with oil, notably Israel which formerly obtained 70% of its oil from Iran.

If the Administration could figure out the relationship between Amtrak and the energy crisis, it might note that the present system could easily be improved drastically, since all major terminal cities (even those on the NARP Board's proposed map) currently have service, all that is needed is increased frequency on existing routes and startup of a few key routes, most of which have good track conditions now. By increasing earning capacity at a more rapid rate than the overhead costs, the subsidy per passenger would plunge; one studied estimate puts the FY 1983 operating deficit at \$485 million, assuming that capital investment rises to \$300 million for the next three years.

Though it would be easy to improve and expand the system from this point, it would not be easy to do so a few years hence after implementation of the DOT plan. The major cities listed earlier would have no rail passenger facilities. Access to railroad mainlines is almost always tough and time-consuming to negotiate, but would be especially difficult in the midst of an energy crisis when the railroad companies would already be overburdened with new freight traffic resulting from that crisis, and when they knew they were negotiating from strength with a desperate government agency.

Congress has been handed a choice. It can cut total costs and efficiency in the short term by accepting DOT's short-sighted plan, or it can favor more productivity and continue to lay the groundwork for a system which could save lives and energy on a major scale within a very short time.