



House, Senate Increase Amtrak Funding

The House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees and committees and the full House passed their Fiscal 2008 transportation/housing appropriations bills in July. The measure is likely to be on the Senate floor in September.

The House took it up July 23 and on the 24th soundly defeated four anti-Amtrak amendments (box, page 2): one by Michele Bachmann (R-MN), two by Jeff Flake (R-AZ), and one by Pete Sessions (R-TX).

Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman John Olver (D-MA) and Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Jim Oberstar (D-MN) both spoke strongly against each amendment. The amendments were targeted primarily at Amtrak's long distance services and both Representatives gave eloquent defenses of the national network.

Olver rebuffed efforts to cut long-distance trains. "All too often we forget about rural areas. Rural communities deserve transportation choices. This line [the *Sunset Limited*] serves a number of rural



Rep. John Olver (D-MA)

areas in the South and Southwest...Amtrak has made some good moves over the recent past. They've reduced their debt by \$500 million. They have exacted about \$100 million of savings so far in their effort to reduce the costs of the long-distance routes."

Oberstar also defended the long distance trains, noting that "the effects (of an Amtrak shutdown) would ripple through our economy, through our national transportation system, stranding millions of passengers and force them onto already congested roadways and airways. People in 106 cities served by Amtrak who are without air service would have to find new means of transportation; 19,000 Amtrak workers would lose their jobs. Their local economies, businesses would suffer."

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Amtrak: Green, Energy Efficient Transportation

Passenger rail can make major contributions towards reducing carbon dioxide emissions and conserving energy—contributions that Amtrak and passenger rail advocates should be touting at every chance to influence both policymakers and consumers.

The "green" influence on consumers, already strong in Europe, is growing here, as evidenced by General Electric's July 25 unveiling of its "green" credit card.

Current measurements understate rail's advantage.

- Amtrak and much of the track network it depends on is undercapitalized. Airlines often get new, more fuel-efficient planes, while Amtrak's fleet keeps on aging.

- The numbers do not reflect rail's ability to encourage pedestrian- and transit-friendly real estate development, and to share facilities with and feed passengers to local transit systems.

- A disproportionate number of train riders travel alone. (If they were forced to drive, their average auto occupancy would

be lower than the national average, and so would their fuel efficiency.)

Nonetheless, Amtrak posts impressive numbers when compared with airliners and automobiles.

Carbon Emissions

Steve Offutt, Senior Advisor at Carbonfund.org (a non-profit organization offering carbon solutions), provided the climate change data in the table. He notes that "airline emissions are magnified because they are at high elevations." Because of this radiative forcing, "the greenhouse gas emissions rate for air travel is usually multiplied by a factor of two to four...We use 2.7."

Similarly, *Financial Times* (U.K.) reported May 18 that "flying results in more greenhouse gas emissions than traveling by train or road, and because the gases are emitted at a high altitude they are estimated to have at least twice as much warming effect on the climate than if they were released at ground level...Eurostar [operator of London-Paris/Brussels trains] says 'a Eurostar

Mode	Climate Impact*
Amtrak diesel	0.196
Amtrak electric	0.20 to 0.215
Auto	0.35
Air (long-haul)	0.49*
Air (medium)	0.51*
Air (short-distance)	0.65*

*CO2 emissions per passenger-mile. Numbers use Amtrak 2006 data. Airline emissions have been multiplied by 2.7 to show impact of high altitude emissions.
Source: Carbonfund.org

journey is 10 times less polluting than flying' [NARP comment: presumably they mean 90% less polluting], and promises to go even further in cutting the environmental impact of its customers by reducing carbon dioxide emissions per traveler by another quarter by 2012."

Energy

Based on 2005 Department of Energy data released May 29 by the Oak Ridge

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Also speaking in support of Amtrak during the debate were Reps. Corrine Brown (D-FL), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Allen Boyd (D-FL), and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR). Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) spoke for the Rail Line Relocation and Improvement Program, which would have major benefits for the Chicago area (and of course Amtrak service).

House Committees Act

The action started June 15 with a brief markup of the bill in the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development. The full committee approved the bill July 11.

The Subcommittee and Committee approved \$1.4 billion for Amtrak and \$50 million to match with state capital investments, the latter to be administered by U.S. DOT. No amendments were offered to cut Amtrak funding and the entire bill passed on a voice vote.

At the July 11 mark-up, Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-MI), former subcommittee chair, thanked Olver “for working with us in formulating a balanced bill that I can support...I thank him for keeping the Amtrak pro-reform language in the bill.”

Knollenberg urged colleagues not to offer across-the-board cut amendments on the floor, explaining that—since highways, transit and two aviation capital programs are immune to cuts—the brunt of such cuts would be borne by unprotected programs like aviation safety and community block grants. (He could also have listed Amtrak.)

Senate Committees Act

Subcommittee and full committee markups were July 10 and 12, respec-

Kummant Testifies on Amtrak Capital Needs

Amtrak President and CEO Alex Kummant was the sole witness at a hearing on “Amtrak Capital Needs” of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials. Subcommittee Chairwoman Corrine Brown (D-FL) chaired the July 11 hearing.

Brown said “...other countries continue to invest billions of dollars each year to their passenger rail systems while the United States continues to fall further and further behind.”

Kummant highlighted the need for new equipment, showing that Amtrak’s loco-

House Appropriations Amendments

During floor debate on the Transportation-HUD bill, four anti-Amtrak amendments were offered:

- Bachmann (R-MN): Transfer \$106 million from Amtrak to homeless programs. Failed 110-308. (Roll Call #692)
- Flake (R-AZ): Eliminate \$475 million from Amtrak operations to reduce the overall cost of the bill. Failed 94-328. (Roll Call #693)
- Flake (R-AZ): Eliminate \$425 million from Amtrak Capital and debt service grants to reduce the overall cost of the bill. Failed 104-312. (Roll Call #694)
- Sessions (R-TX): Eliminate the route with the highest lost per passenger mile (a clear and stated attack on the *Sunset Limited*, perhaps the first floor vote aimed at a specific route). Failed 139-283. (Roll Call #697)

Tables showing how each member voted are in the members-only section of our website, www.narprail.org, and at <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2007/index.asp>.

tively. There is \$1.375 billion for Amtrak, plus \$100 million for states. On July 10, Subcommittee Ranking Member Kit Bond (R-MO) supported the bill and complemented Subcommittee Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) on her work. However, noting the looming Presidential veto threats, Bond said, “I’m afraid we are on a collision course with the executive branch.”

Highway Trust Fund Red Flags

As for the 2009 Highway Trust Fund deficit, now projected at over \$2 billion, House Committee Chair David Obey (D-WI), said July 11, “I know there are some people who think that, when the time comes, this committee will simply make up that shortfall with general revenue. I’ve got news for you: it ain’t gonna happen. The responsibility for funding these programs lies with the authorizing committees; they passed the bill and guaranteed the funding. If this problem is

motives and cars run many more miles per year than freight and commuter rail equipment. He also discussed working with the railroads for better Amtrak on-time performance.

He proudly noted Amtrak’s progress towards bringing rolling stock and infrastructure to a “state of good repair,” and the 90% on-time performance that Acela Express posted in June.

Emphasizing the importance of Amtrak facilities, he pointed out more passengers use New York’s Penn Station than at all of the New York airports combined.

Much time was devoted to how to fur-

dropped on the doorstep of this committee, no matter what we do, people will squawk that we didn’t clean up someone else’s mess.”

Murray made similar points at both Senate markups. From July 12: “The Highway Trust Fund will be bankrupt by \$2 billion by 2009, and some estimates say it could be as high as \$4 billion...This is the Finance Committee’s problem and they need to work on it now rather than later...Without [some action by the Finance Committee], our subcommittee may be forced next year to dramatically scale back our investments.”

Los Angeles Subway Expansion

To permit extension of the Metro Purple Line (formerly the red line branch to Wilshire/Western) to Santa Monica, both bills repeal the ban on tunneling under Wilshire Boulevard. Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) are leading this effort. ■

ther raise Northeast Corridor (NEC) speeds, a point of interest for both Full Committee Chair Jim Oberstar (D-MN) and Ranking Member John Mica (R-FL).

Oberstar said a majority of the problems plaguing Amtrak are legacy problems that have never been properly addressed. He argued that Congress should give Amtrak the funding it desperately needs, and let the operators at Amtrak put it to good use.

Mica said he would support a \$32.5 billion program for a New York-Washington high-speed service—rail or magnetic

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Carbon

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National Laboratory (ORNL), in its annual Transportation Energy Data Book, autos and commercial airlines, respectively, consumed 27% and 20% more energy (British Thermal Units or BTUs) per passenger-mile than Amtrak. A passenger-mile is one passenger traveling one mile.

Looked at the other way around, Amtrak used 21% and 15% less energy per passenger-mile than cars and airlines.

Energy Intensity by Mode, ranked from most to least efficient (BTU's per passenger-mile, 2005 data except general aviation is 2001)

Amtrak: 2,709

Commuter Railroads: 2,743

Rail transit: 2,784

Certificated air carriers: 3,264

Automobile: 3,445

Light trucks: 7,004 (2-axle, 4-tire)

General aviation: 10,384

ORNL data suggests Amtrak's diesel average was 2,469 BTUs per passenger-mile, while electric was 3,229. Some possible explanations for diesel's superior efficiency include:

- Many diesel services, notably those in California, have attractive fares supported by state funding.

- Amtrak Northeast Corridor fares are very high, even on the Regionals, while limited capacity helps boost load factors even at high fares.

- Load factors, at least on the long-distance trains, tend to be higher than on the Northeast Corridor, where capacity is driven by the peak load segment in the New York-Philadelphia area.

- Acela Express is the world's heaviest high-speed train, and probably the most over-powered, with fewer seats than the Metroliners it replaced. (Safety regulators required two power cars rather than a cab car with seats and one power car as originally planned.)

- High speeds consume more energy. To take the extreme case, a comprehensive article in the July 1 *Guardian* (U.K.) said "increasing the top speed of trains from 125mph to 220mph can consume four times as much energy."

Our diesel/electric breakdown is imprecise because of

- the three month mismatch between calendar-year energy consumption data and fiscal year ridership, and

- the need to estimate the proportion

of diesel and electric power used on the many services that use both. For example, we assumed Northeast Regionals were 5% diesel because diesels handle Springfield-New Haven and Washington-Richmond-Newport News, and long-distance trains using the Northeast Corridor were 15% electric.

Here are the numbers we used to get Amtrak's 2005 diesel-electric breakdown:

- passenger miles: 32% electric, 68% diesel

- BTU's: 37.7% electric, 62.3% diesel

- Diesel: 9.0958 trillion BTU's divided by 3.684 billion passenger-miles (ORNL assumes 138,700 BTU's per gallon of diesel fuel)

- Electric: 5.5042 trillion BTUs divided by 1.7045 billion passenger-miles (ORNL assumes 10,339 BTUs per kilowatt hour)

Amtrak Cuts Energy Use

Amtrak's energy consumption in calendar 2006 was down 1.6%—to 14.3 trillion BTUs, from 14.6 in 2005. Amtrak energy consumption has fallen every year since 2001 when it was 18.1 trillion BTUs.

The 2006 calculations: Diesel fuel consumption was down 4.6% at 65.477 million gallons (from 65,477); kilowatt hours rose 3.4% to 548,856 thousand (548.9 million) BTUs, from 531,377.

As information, Amtrak passenger-miles in fiscal 2006, which is three months ahead of the calendar year, were down 1.1%, but—in the first nine months of fiscal 2007—rose 5.0% above the same period in fiscal 2006. A passenger-mile is one passenger traveling one mile.

Amtrak's Future Improvements

With existing equipment, Amtrak looks forward to anti-idling methods on locomotives such as automatic start/stop. And, since the relevant measures are "per passenger-mile," anything that increases load factors—better service, more advertising, higher gasoline prices—will improve Amtrak's energy performance.

Any new equipment would incorporate state-of-the-art energy efficiency practices. (The impact of EPA diesel locomotive standards to take effect during 2012-15 are uncertain. Proposed standards to reduce nitrogen oxide and particulates may carry a 3-5% fuel penalty, but the railroad industry is telling EPA—which now also must regulate greenhouse gas emissions—that more fuel means more CO2 emissions.)

Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX)

Amtrak is a charter member of the Chicago Climate Exchange www.chicagoclimatex.com, "the world's first and North America's only greenhouse gas emissions registry, reduction and trading system." Amtrak has agreed to reduce its emissions from diesel fuel by 6% from 2003 to 2010 (compared with the average for 1998-2001 as a baseline). This is the largest percentage reduction of any voluntary commitment in the U.S.

The methodology adjusts for major service changes. Thus Amtrak did not get credited for the significant "Amtrak emissions" reduction that resulted when Amtrak ceased to run Boston area commuter trains. Conversely, there are some methods that could be used to account for carbon dioxide emissions associated with a major diesel train service increase.

When Amtrak beats its agreed CO2 emissions reduction target, it can sell credits to other Exchange members who need them. The Exchange does not reflect relative efficiency of one type of transportation (or other enterprise) over another, only the ability of members to meet or exceed their emissions reduction goals, or to offset missed requirements by using a market-based more efficient source.

CCX has only one other railroad member—San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission, which runs Altamont Commuter Express (Stockton-San Jose). ■

For ORNL's latest Transportation Energy Data Book (Edition 26) go to <<http://cta.ornl.gov/data/Index.shtml>>; see especially Tables 2.14 and 9.10.

Amtrak Labor Update

The Fraternal Order of Police ratified a new three year contract with Amtrak. The announcement was made on July 23. According to Amtrak, "the contract provides compensation and workplace flexibility comparable to major municipal law enforcement agencies."

Amtrak and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers jointly announced a tentative agreement on a new labor contract covering Amtrak's 1,300 locomotive engineers on July 20. The contract is now out to members for vote. Details of the contract will not be made public until it is ratified.



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OUR MISSION: A MODERN, CUSTOMER-FOCUSED NATIONAL PASSENGER TRAIN NETWORK THAT PROVIDES A TRAVEL CHOICE AMERICANS WANT.

Robert Conheim 1945-2007

NARP Board Member Robert Conheim died July 15. Bob was active on the NARP Board and in Capitol Corridor Riders, a group of regular passengers on California's Capitol Corridor. His fellow riders dubbed him "Lord Mayor" for his efforts to organize social functions amongst passengers.

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority Managing Director (and NARP Board member) Gene Skoropowski said of Bob, "His quick wit, love of life and family, plus his passion for good passenger train service, were his hallmarks...He recognized the value of passenger train service and the positive impact it had on his life, his community and on the life of virtually everyone who uses the train.

"He was willing to become politically active to work for more service and more public investment in trains, and this effort consumed what time and energy he had right up to the end. "

Please don't forget to tell your friends, neighbors and acquaintances about NARP's Grow Rail Campaign (July News). Visit www.narprail.org/vision for complete information

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Fifth Downeaster train—Begins August 1; has been operated with motorcoaches pending completion of infrastructure work. Schedules at www.amtrakdowneaster.com

Southbound Texas Eagle Departs 15 Minutes Earlier, Chicago-Alton! The Chicago departure is now 1:45 p.m. No change St. Louis-south.

Missouri Changes—Schedules return to previous patterns, effective August 8. Ann Rutledge again runs through Chicago-St. Louis-Kansas City. Contact Amtrak for schedules.

More Keystone trackwork changes—August 13 sees Phase II of trackwork between Paoli and Philadelphia with many modified train times. Trains 605, 609, 645, and 649 depart Philadelphia earlier, many other trains have schedules lengthened and leave later.

Surfliner trackwork shutdown—September 15-16 (and the last two trains on Sept. 14), Most 500 series trains cancelled, 700 series trains operate through to Anaheim with bus service on to San Diego

Capital Needs

(from page 2)

levitation—grade-separated from commuter and freight trains, using federal funds and private capital.

Ranking Subcommittee Member Bill Shuster (R-PA) asked Kummant how maglev would be incorporated into any new plans for the NEC. Kummant: "I cannot say. Maglev does not even have a long enough history to track maintenance costs."

"We cannot do any meaningful planning until we have a dedicated funding commitment from Congress" said Kummant. He wants to make essential improvements to the system now that will improve performance and reliability.

A \$7 billion NEC investment would reduce New York-Washington travel time by 25 minutes (to 2:20 with five stops), but the biggest benefit would be insuring

continuous operation of a facility plagued with elderly infrastructure, including Baltimore tunnels built in 1873 (subsequent work improved clearances and—in 1935—added electrification) and the 96-year-old Portal bridge over the Hackensack west of Secaucus Jct., NJ.

The \$7 billion would replace tunnels in Baltimore and New York and the Susquehanna and Portal bridges, and upgrade tracks at five stations.

The station-track item is a reminder that the best way to reduce running time often involves eliminating low speeds rather than increasing top speed. ■

Kummant's informative PowerPoint, and Reps. Brown, Oberstar, and Shuster's opening statements are linked from our website, www.narprail.org, click on "What's New" on the left side.