



NARPnews

“Amtrak is serving more customers and operating more efficiently than it ever has. It is on the right track. Now is when we should be investing in Amtrak’s growth.”

SENATOR CHRIS COONS (D-DE)

Sunset Limited and Food and Beverage Service Hang In the Balance in Congress

As the U.S. Congress moves the transportation appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2015, the House GOP has taken aim at passenger rail through a series of anti-Amtrak amendments.

NARP has responded vigorously, urging members to speak to their elected officials about the economic and social benefits that Amtrak brings to hundreds of cities and towns across the U.S. It is critical that we educate members of Congress on the interconnected nature of the national system. As we’ve learned from the past, the savings from cutting a train from the network are overwhelmed by overhead costs spread across a fewer number of passengers. If Congress kills the *Sunset*, there will be an immediate effect on the network; the *Texas Eagle* will bring in less revenue with the loss of the through-cars to Los Angeles, and the *Crescent* and *City of New Orleans* will see their revenues fall through the loss of connecting passengers. Meanwhile, their costs rise when they become the sole occupants of the New Orleans terminal. If food is cut, there’s no telling how many Amtrak customers will be scared away. The House is trying hard to make Amtrak less efficient with these cuts. (continued on Page 2 in “House Launches Attacks...”)

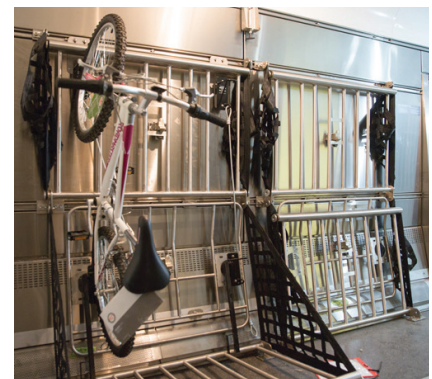
New Amtrak Long Distance Equipment Hits the Tracks



After waiting over a decade for new equipment, the national network will soon benefit from 55 new baggage cars, one of which just went into field testing. The new Viewliner II baggage cars come in four types and will serve all 15 of the long-distance routes making up Amtrak’s national network.

“The updated design provides for improved reliability and maintenance, and better baggage loading/unloading procedures,” Amtrak told *Railway Age* magazine. “Also, the new built-in luggage racks can secure unboxed bicycles to support the growing demand by passengers to bring their bikes onboard an expanding number of routes.”

The new baggage cars are being made by CAF USA in Elmira, NY. Amtrak is further modernizing its fleet with an order for 130 single-level, long-distance Viewliner



Above: Amtrak’s new Viewliner II cars in production.

Below: Bicycle racks on the inside of the new baggage cars will allow walk-on service on more trains. Photos by Amtrak.

II passenger cars, which includes diners, sleepers and baggage-crew dormitory cars. While more cars for the network are certainly needed, these cars represent important first steps.

House Launches Series of Attacks on Amtrak

(Continued from Page 1)



Early on, signs were promising that the House would ignore these irresponsible attacks on passenger service; Rep. Paul Broun (R-GA) initiated two attempts on June 9 to eliminate funding, and both

were rebuffed in a bipartisan fashion. Additionally, an extreme amendment offered by Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX) on June 10 to kill six long distance routes was also shot down.

However, late on June 10, three anti-rail amendments were tacked on just before the bill was passed:

- Denham (R-CA) amendment prohibiting any funds in the Act from being used during fiscal year 2015 for the California high-speed rail project – adopted

by a vote of 227 yeas - 186 nays.

- Gingrey (R-GA) amendment prohibiting any funds in the Act from being used during fiscal year 2015 to subsidize Amtrak food and beverage service – adopted by voice vote.
- Sessions (R-TX) amendment prohibiting any funds in the Act from being used during fiscal year 2015 to support the Amtrak route with the highest per-passenger subsidy (the *Sunset Limited*) – adopted by voice vote.

Passengers Look to the Senate to Stand Up for Trains

NARP members have taken up the fight by asking their Senators to turn back any anti-train amendments. We're also letting U.S. Representatives know that we're paying attention to how these votes have shaken out. The Senate has responded, with Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) introduc-

ing an amendment that would boost Amtrak's funding to \$1.62 billion (an increase of roughly \$230 million). However, partisan disagreement over the rules for introducing amendments led to the Senate adjourning for the July 4th recess without advancing the bill.


It appears that the reconciliation conference between House and Senate leadership, likely to be taking place sometime in late July before Congress adjourns for the remainder of the summer, will decide the fate of the *Sunset Limited* and food and beverage services.


Take Your Advocacy Online

Following NARP on Facebook and Twitter keeps you connected with all the latest news and allows you to take action when it means the most.

Follow us to join the conversation:

-  [Facebook.com/narprail](https://www.facebook.com/narprail)
-  [@narprail](https://twitter.com/narprail)

 NARP @narprail · Jun 12
The House just landed a sneak attack on #Amtrak. Stay tuned for another update soon. ow.ly/xVjYB

 NARP @narprail · Jun 25
Just released: Train passengers look to Supreme Court for relief: ow.ly/yrquf
#Amtrak #OnTimePerformance

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This issue has news through June 24, 2014.
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NARP Welcomes New Board Members

NARP is pleased to introduce four new additions to its Board of Directors, who were elected by the NARP Council of Representatives at the Spring 2014 Council Meeting. These new board members have demonstrated a strong commitment to NARP's mission and come to NARP with diverse qualifications and regional representations. We look forward to their many positive contributions to the organization.



Carol Haslett joined NARP to be part of a strong, reliable voice for passenger rail reaching all levels of elected officials. Haslett's background as a congressional staff person, lobbyist for a utility, and owner of her own consulting firm means she understands how to represent NARP to elected officials and their staff. Haslett has a long history with passenger rail, both as a life-long traveler and rail advocate. In NARP, Haslett has been a council member, board retreat facilitator, co-chair of the Search Committee and member of the Membership Committee. Haslett is also the chair of the Amtrak Customer Advisory Council and a member of [All Aboard Ohio](#). Haslett has served on numerous non-profit boards and understands what makes a board successful. She and her husband, Charles, live in Chagrin Falls, Ohio.



J. Charles (Chuck) Riecks lives in Charleston, West Virginia and is married to Alice B. Riecks. They have two children and three grandchildren. Riecks is a retired Army chaplain and holds an A.B., M.Ed. from the College of William and Mary and an M.Div. from Southern Methodist University. On Amtrak, he rides: the *Cardinal*, the *Pennsylvanian*, and the *Northeast Regional* trains (including the Lynchburg train). Riecks says he has ridden every Amtrak long distance train at least once since 2000. He's also ridden the Metro-North Hudson line service, and he used to ride the streetcars when they ran in Washington, DC. He says the first train trip he remembers taking was in 1954 on the B&O's *Capitol Limited*, and the Santa Fe's *Super Chief*.

James Hamre has advocated for improved and expanded intercity passenger rail service since he joined NARP in the mid-1980s. He was elected to the council a couple years later and has actively served since then. He is also a member of [All Aboard Washington](#) and serves as its vice president and newsletter editor. He is excited and honored that his fellow council members have elected him to the NARP board of directors. As NARP moves forward into a new era, his goals include continuing the never ending battle to put passenger rail on an equal level as highways and air, and to help NARP grow both its membership and its already strong advocacy efforts and influence.

Peter LeCody (See member spotlight in the [February 2014 issue of NARP News](#))

BRINGING BIKES ON BOARD AMTRAK

Did you know that NARP is part of the Amtrak Bicycle Task Force? NARP is working with Amtrak and partners from the cycling industry to develop a solution for bringing bikes on board more Amtrak trains—without inconveniencing regular passengers.

On June 4, Deborah Stone-Wulf, Amtrak's Chief of Sales Distribution and Customer Service and Task Force co-chair reported in a blog post for the Adventure Cycling Association, "[We at

Amtrak] understand and appreciate the synergies between rail and bike travel, and continue to work hard to better serve the bicycling community... I expect that we will be ready to announce the pilot routes that we will be focused on very soon."

Amtrak announced June 24 that it will begin equipping all of its long-distance trains, including the *Capitol Limited*, with bike-friendly baggage cars by the end of the year.

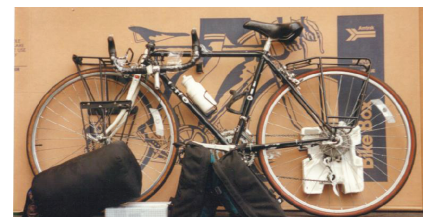


Photo by www.cyclotour.com

Although select trains allow walk-on service for bicycles, most trains require that bicycles be partially disassembled and put in a box like the one above to be stored as checked baggage.

California's High Speed Train Granted Funding Milestone

Governor Jerry Brown and the California General Assembly struck a budget deal that will include \$250 million for the 220 MPH train that will link the state's northern and southern economic engines. Critically, the budget deal also provides a dedicated source of funding for the Los Angeles – San Francisco train that would connect communities all along California's San Joaquin Valley.

The deal, spearheaded by Governor Brown, relies on a cap-and-trade program, which would charge fees to entities that pollute above a specified threshold. In future years, 25 percent of those fees will go to help build the line. The electrified train will help reduce harmful emissions by providing a clean alternative to short-distance air travel.

"They're creating the model for how we can construct fast and convenient high speed rail to connect local economies and communities all across

the country—especially here in the Midwest," Rick Harnish, NARP Board Member and Executive Director of the [Midwest High Speed Rail Association](#) Executive Director, told Railway Age. "California did the right thing by creating this revenue stream for high speed rail. Now, it's time for Congress to follow suit and invest seriously in passenger rail at the federal level by passing the [GROW America Act](#), which sets aside \$19 billion in dedicated federal funding for rail programs."

California officials are also pointing to the enormous amount of jobs building the line will create. The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that 20,000 jobs are created for every \$1 billion invested in rail. With the \$68 billion high speed line on firmer financial footing, residents of the Central Valley—hard hit by 2008's economic recession—can expect some relief. Additionally, Sacramento-based train manufacturer Siemens is well posi-

tioned to bid on any equipment contracts issued by California (both high speed and conventional).

The Federal Railroad Administration also issued a positive Record of Decision (ROD) for the project. The ROD was based upon an analysis of the environmental impact of the project, coupled with public input to help regulators understand the human impact. "The preferred alternative is comprised of the alignment alternative adjacent to the BNSF Railway bypasses of Corcoran, the Allensworth area, and the Bakersfield Hybrid alternative," wrote the FRA. "The preferred alternative includes a Downtown Fresno Station, a Kings/Tulare regional station, and a downtown Bakersfield station. FRA selected this combination of route alignments because they are more compatible with the long-range development planning goals of the region, and will result in fewer potential impacts on wetlands and special-status species habitat."

Millennials Stand Up for High Speed Rail



Bianca Rodriguez of Fresno State *I Will Ride*. Photo by US High Speed Rail Association.

Young adults spoke out in support of California High Speed Rail during a special event on June 3 as part of the three-day West Coast Rail Conference in San

Francisco, hosted by the US High Speed Rail Association.

NARP organized a panel of college students, recent graduates and young professionals to testify in support of the project. After being introduced by the Honorable Fiona Ma, former Assemblywoman and Speaker Pro Tem, seven young advocates explained what high speed passenger train service would mean for them and their generation.

"One of the reasons I'm here today is because I feel a heightened sense of responsibility to do whatever I can to ensure that my generation's opportunities are no longer car-dependent," said Rebecca Sansom, Director of Trains-forming

America, in her testimony.

Andrew McLane, a NARP member and recent graduate of San Francisco State, helped mobilize the young speakers, which included McLane and his peers as well as NARP members Rebecca Sansom and Jeffery Tucker.

NARP organized this event as part of NARP's new Millennial Outreach Campaign, which empowers student leaders and recent graduates to become leaders in passenger train advocacy. NARP has chosen California as the starting point of its nation-wide campaign, where it will be working with local affiliate groups to develop student initiatives that build support for California HSR.

LA Union Station Unveils Master Plan, Track Improvements

The Los Angeles Union Station ushers 70,000 passengers in and out each day, but that number is expected to climb to 140,000 by 2040. Metro released a new master plan for the station which would not only expand its capacity to accommodate the growth in passengers; it would transform it into a large multi-modal facility serving subways, bikes, pedestrians – and possibly the high speed route between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

According to the master plan, which will be funded by California’s Measure R, the new station will be characterized by a new civic plaza replacing the current parking lot in the front, a new grand concourse and development of 3.25 million square feet of the surrounding areas with hotel, office, retail and park spaces.

But first, Metro is addressing its long-time bottleneck issue through a \$350 million track-improvement project. This project, separate from the new master plan but progressing in coordination

with it, will increase the station capacity by 40-50 percent and may significantly reduce travel time for Metrolink and Amtrak passengers.

As the Southern California Regional Interconnector Project (SCRIP) enters its environmental and engineering phase, Metro will install four new sections of track, reconfiguring the current layout, which is hindered by dead-end tracks and only having a single entrance. The interconnector will extend several tracks at the south end of the station, which will then cross over the 101 Freeway and loop back to existing tracks going north, south and east.

The track improvements will be funded by state and federal grants as well as Measure R. Construction is set to begin in 2017 and be completed by late 2019 or early 2021.

“This will be a game changer for intercity and regional rail in Southern California” Paul Dyson, the president of the Rail Passengers Association of California and Nevada, and NARP council member, [told the Los Angeles Times](#).

Congestion relief

Under a proposal, new tracks would create a loop, allowing trains to run through Union Station, rather than entering and leaving only from the north.



Source: Rail Passenger Assn. of California & Nevada

Paul Duginski / @latimesgraphics

When the track upgrades are complete, Amtrak and Metrolink trains will be able to run straight through the terminal. This will mean shorter stops at Union Station for most trains and no stop at all for express trains.

MASTER PLAN PROJECT GOALS

1. Celebrate the site’s history
2. Improve the Union Station passenger experience
3. Create a great destination
4. Prepare for High Speed Rail

www.metro.net

Transbay Transit Center Reaches Halfway Point

Situated at the other end of the possible high speed line will be another impressive transit hub.

The Transbay Transit Center in downtown San Francisco will connect several of the Bay Area’s transit authorities, including BART, Muni, and Caltrain as well as Amtrak and the possible Los Angeles-San Francisco high speed rail line. The Transbay Joint Powers Authority just announced that the \$4.5 billion project, funded by California’s Measure R, is halfway complete.

The project started in 2010 with the demolition of the former transit center, the Transbay Terminal. After massive excavation and underground work, the Authority reports that it will begin to make progress on the above-ground structure this fall. The later stages of construction will yield a 5.4 acre public park on the roof and new neighborhoods, parks, shops and offices surrounding the new center.



The center’s first phase will include a five-story bus terminal stretching across four blocks and a rooftop park comparable to New York’s High Line.

Passengers Busted Between Fort Worth and San Antonio

Texas Eagle passengers will have to take an Amtrak-provided shuttle bus between Fort Worth and San Antonio from now until September while construction is completed on Tower 55, a busy railroad intersection in downtown Fort Worth.

"I think everyone knew this was coming. The problem is that Fort Worth's Tower 55 is at the center of the railroad universe," Peter LeCody, president of Texas Rail Advocates and NARP board member, **told the Star-Telegram**. "It's going to be a long, hot summer for passengers transiting through Fort Worth. Let's hope there are orderly plans in place to minimize the inconvenience." Amtrak will be able to avoid Tower 55 by using the Trinity Railway Express commuter line, which passes through Irving and Northeast Tarrant County. When this route reaches Fort Worth, passengers will have to get off the train and board long-distance buses, which will transport them to stops in Cleburne, McGregor,

Temple, Austin, San Marcos and San Antonio.

This Sunday, July 13, will be the only exception to the modified schedule, when TRE will be closed for maintenance. Amtrak will take passengers as far as Dallas then bus them to the other *Texas Eagle* stops on the way to San Antonio.

The \$100-million-plus construction project on Tower 55 will address the congestion that plagues the intersection where north-south and east-west tracks owned by Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railroads meet. It is also a matter of public safety; trains often obstruct residential and industrial streets for long stretches of time, and children are known to crawl over and under rail cars to get to the nearby elementary school.

Amtrak says that passenger service will return to normal on September 4. To find out more details on the summer schedule, visit www.amtrak.com/alerts.

Have you ever wanted to give a ride to someone in need?

Most of you have a friend, family member, or know someone who suffers from a medical issue, disease or injury that has left them immobile or made it difficult for them to travel from one place to the next. Cars, buses and airplanes may not be an accessible or efficient transportation option to make the necessary visits to facilities where they receive the care they need to cure or treat their ailment. This is one of the reasons why America's long-distance and intercity rail systems are such a vital component of this country's transportation system.

One member in Montana writes to us saying:

"When I was diagnosed with bladder cancer, I was sent to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, for treatment. I've been back many times since for additional treatments and surgery. I travel there aboard Amtrak's *Empire Builder* because the airport nearest to my home is 100 miles away and I can't afford the inflated airfares. The *Empire Builder* has literally been a lifesaver for me and many others all across Montana and North Dakota."

This story and many more like it show that your support of NARP has been giving rides to people in need all along. Your partnership with NARP helps people around the country who rely on trains as a lifeline.

Please visit www.narprail.org or call (202) 408-8362 to learn about more ways you can support NARP.

If you're interested in our vehicle donation program please visit www.narprail-cardonations.org or call 855-627-7227.

NARP TRAVELER'S ADVISORY

Wolverine Service and *Blue Water* Trains 364 and 365 will operate on a modified schedule from May 19 to August 31 to accommodate track improvement projects in Western Michigan. Please see Amtrak.com/alerts to view the modified schedules.

Texas Eagle Trains 21/421 and 22/422 will not operate between Fort Worth and San Antonio, affecting service at Cleburne, McGregor, Temple, Taylor, Austin and San Marcos from July 4 to September 3. Substitute bus service will be provided. (See story above.)

Significant delays are possible on *Empire Builder* Trains 7/27/807 and Trains 8/28/808 through July 14 due to very high amounts of freight traffic. Additionally, due to construction that has temporarily rerouted Amtrak, bus service will be provided to and from the Grand Forks, Devils Lake and Rugby stations.