



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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(No. 1 was mailed Feb. 9)

RETURN REQUESTED

NARP PLUGS CAPITAL BUDGET

Amtrak should have a \$500 million capital budget in Fiscal 1978 (the year beginning Oct. 1, 1977), according to NARP's Orren Beaty in a mailgram to President Carter and Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams.

Amtrak can't order new cars for Eastern long-haul trains unless its capital budget is at least \$130 million.

Environmentalists who endorsed Beaty's mailgram, and whose names appeared on it, were: Linda M. Billings of the Sierra Club, Leonard Arrow of Environmental Action; Anne Wickham of Friends of the Earth, Inc.; Rita Molyneaux of National Parks and Conservation. The mailgram has also been endorsed by leaders of eleven regional associations of railroad passengers.

"We believe that circumstances warrant a bold commitment by you towards improving our nationwide rail passenger network, making it a vital alternative for countless trips now made unnecessarily and uneconomically by automobile," said Beaty.

"We understand your concern to limit your budget request, but we urgently point out that a **strong, new commitment to developing Amtrak's infrastructure** (maintenance facilities, stations, and rollingstock) **is necessary now in order to improve the future efficiency of Amtrak.**"

Beaty concluded, "We believe \$500 million is a modest sum when compared with the benefits it could produce and with sums which this nation continues to spend in increasing amounts on less efficient transport modes."

\$500 million compares with \$105 million in President Carter's budget; \$77 million proposed earlier by President Ford (though Secy. Coleman had recommended \$105 million before Ford's

Between Feb. 1 and March 2, Amtrak restored to operation all eight of the trains cancelled January 19. Furthermore, Santa Fe and Union Pacific have resumed operation of the SDP-40 units (see Jan. News) at normal speeds. Despite service problems, preliminary estimates indicate Amtrak's January ridership was up 3% from '76 to '77.

budget office whittled it down); \$130 million already authorized (and thus requiring only an appropriations bill) and which is the *minimum* amount under which Amtrak could order any cars for Eastern long-haul trains; and \$317 million in Amtrak's Five-Year Plan. (The Plan states that cutbacks in capital spending from the levels proposed in the Plan would lead to higher-than-projected operating deficits in future years.)

NARP is not discouraged by the fact that President Carter's budget includes a relatively low figure for Amtrak capital

improvements. First, it does represent a jump both from President Ford's piddling \$77 million recommendation and from the \$92.6 million made available during the current fiscal year. Second, as reported on our last front page, the new Administration had only a short time within which to amend the Ford budget, a short time during which it was also preoccupied with hiring its own staff people, a process still continuing.

Certainly some of Secretary Adams' public comments should give us cheer.

But, most importantly, \$105 million may not be the final figure. Whether by Congressional initiative, or at the urging of the President, after the new Administration staff has had a reasonable amount of time to study the issues, it is quite possible that the \$105 million will be exceeded.

This is where letters from NARP members both to the President and to your legislators come in. We cannot overstate the importance of urging your legislators to support an increase of the capital program above \$105 million.

New rollingstock has played the major role in Amtrak's recent ridership growth, but — unless the capital budget rises to at least the \$130 million already authorized (but not appropriated) by Congress — Amtrak will not even be able to begin ordering new cars for the Eastern long-haul trains.

The importance of new cars stems from these related factors: the "all-new" environment is attractive to the passengers; the

(continued on page 2)

"(Mr. Coleman) and I have a real philosophical difference on (Amtrak) because I feel that the (national rail passenger) network must be perpetuated—even if we may have to adjust the amount of service that is offered on certain lines.

"We must provide a transportation alternative for people who are unable to drive or fly, such as women who must travel unassisted with numbers of children, people in the military, elderly and others who can't drive and people who live up North where the weather inhibits driving and flying much of the time.

"I understand Mr. Coleman's objections to the heavy subsidization, but we have to be patient with the problems of the moment. I am convinced that as the cost of energy goes even higher, alternatives to driving will be more favorable. We must become more energy-efficient and more sensitive to environmental considerations."

—Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams
Interview in Feb. 6 *New York Times*

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NARP Plugs Capital Budget *(cont'd. from p. 1)*

heating and air-conditioning is more reliable, and the comfort factor is enhanced by humidity control, which now exists neither on the older cars nor on buses; new equipment in many instances has meant an improvement in the food service and, in response to the passengers' enjoyment and ridership growth, the morale of the crews is better; maintenance cost should be reduced as aged, breakdown-prone cars are retired from service.

The ridership growth potential with new cars has been demonstrated in the past with Turboliners between Chicago and Detroit in 1975 and with the Metroliners between Washington and New York over the past decade. This pattern was demonstrated again more recently on the West Coast, where Amfleet has been introduced. November ridership figures were up (from 1975 to 1976) by 94% Los Angeles-San Diego (though the frequency was only increased from three to four daily round-trips); and by 42% and 118%, respectively, on Seattle-Portland and Seattle-Vancouver services where frequencies were held constant. Western long-haul trains are to get new bi-level cars beginning later this year.

Meanwhile, Amtrak's vital Eastern links continue to operate with old, run-down equipment: NY-Florida; Washington-Montreal (which is giving Amtrak a bad name in Canada); NY/Boston-Cleveland-Chicago; and NY/Washington-Pittsburgh-Chicago/St. Louis.

New equipment is badly needed for these runs. Amtrak needs \$60 million in FY 1978 for design and construction of Eastern long-haul cars, which would bring the total capital budget to \$165 million; at least \$130 million, as noted above, is needed if any such cars are to be ordered.

Even more than \$165 million is needed if all of the long-haul trains are to have new equipment year-round. The 5-year plan proposes spending \$64.5 million in FY 1978 toward the purchase of 153 additional bi-level cars. If these are to be ordered, it is

For its FY 1978 operating budget, Amtrak had requested \$534 million, and President Ford had approved \$490 million. The Carter budget allows \$500 million.

crucial that this happen before Pullman-Standard completes the current order, i.e. while the production lines are still geared up to meet it. Pullman-Standard has indicated that, because of shut-down/start-up costs, it would very likely not reopen production if current operations were allowed to shut down for any significant period of time. And to switch manufacturers "mid-stream" would drastically increase costs, and probably mean loss of the business by U.S. manufacturers.

Of course, the capital budget needs are not confined to rollingstock. In the next column, to help you relate Amtrak funding to expenditures and projects in various parts of the country, is a chart based on Amtrak's Five-Year Plan and recent budget analysis by Amtrak which shows the impact the \$105 million budget would have on Amtrak's capital investment plan.

IMPACT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S CAPITAL BUDGET ON AMTRAK'S 5-YEAR PLAN (Numbers in parentheses are thousands of dollars)

Passenger equipment

Fully funded - Contractural cost adjustments in present bi-level order (16,826)
Metroliner overhauls (11,853)
Baggage car head-end conversions (4,500)

Not funded - Additional bi-level cars (64,584)
Single-level long haul cars (59,850)

Major station improvements

Fully funded - Chicago (1,000)
New Carrollton, MD (contractural obligation) (4,000)

Not funded - Aberdeen, MD (128)
Altoona, PA (300)
Auburn, WA (750)
Buffalo, NY (5,000)
Charleston, WV (200)
Charlottesville, VA (100)
Cincinnati, OH (5,000)
Coatesville, PA (184)
Connecticut Stations (150)
Grand Central Terminal, NY (100)
Little Rock, AR (1,115)
Mansfield, OH (400)
Memphis, TN (1,800)
Paoli, PA (187)
Pittsburgh, PA (300)
Springfield, MA (249)
Tampa, FL (1,800)
Windsor, CT (212)

403(b) routes (1,500)
403(c) "experimental" routes (2,000)

Repair facilities

Fully funded - Chicago (11,680)
Penn Station, NY (50)

Partially funded - Beech Grove, IN (5,497 of 11,713)
Philadelphia (55 of 203)
Sunnyside, NY (50 of 250)

Not funded - Hialeah, FL (500)
Oakland, CA (850)
New Orleans, LA (655)
St. Petersburg, FL (2,000)
Seattle, WA (2,000)
Wilmington, DE - locomotive heavy repair shop (11,000)

Major Commissaries

Partially funded - Chicago (165 of 203)
New York, NY - Penn Station (345 of 425)
Seattle, WA (455 of 560)
Washington, D.C. (650 of 800)

Not funded - Albany-Rensselaer, NY (750)
Boston, MA (700)
Miami, FL (550)
New York, NY - Sunnyside (90)

Right of Way Improvements

Philadelphia-Harrisburg

Fully funded - Hi tension transformers (20)
Partially funded - Railroad bridges (2,000 of 5,000)
Signal power transformers (35 of 135)
Not funded - Harrisburg Circuit Breakers (40)
Switches (40)
Track work (5,149)

New Haven-Springfield

Partially funded - Railroad bridges (500 of 1,800)
Not funded - Track work (2,794)

Grade crossings

Partially funded (800 of 1,000)

Other

Partially funded - Spot improvements (700 of 1,000)
Not funded - Hoffman Mainline (Schenectady, NY) (2,400)
ICG H/O Connection (Champaign/Carbondale-Chicago) (2,500)
Omaha Connection (1,000)
Post Rd. Rensselaer (Albany-Boston) (5,000)
Sheff-Kankakee (2,000)

Minor station improvements

Not funded - Austin, TX (30)
Jacksonville, FL (45)
Mystic, CT (55)
Old Saybrook, CT (83)
Philadelphia-Harrisburg Stations
Downington (92)
Elizabethtown (40)
Malvern (53)
Parkesburg (86)
Whitford (48)
Reno, NV (75)
Westerly, RI (91)

REGIONAL MEETINGS

The 1977 regional meetings were even more successful than those of a year ago. Better attendance was noted, in particular, at regional meetings in Atlanta, Philadelphia, and near Washington, D.C.

Several of the regional meetings approved resolutions on various aspects of rail passenger service. The Toledo meeting (Region VI) adopted the wording of Orren Beatty's mailgram (see lead article) but favored a \$1 billion capital budget for Amtrak in FY 1978 instead of \$500 million. Several regional meetings received good newspaper coverage, and Region VIII was covered by a network TV station in Minneapolis, which broadcast the Region's call for service to Winnipeg.

Two regions called for direct Washington-Pittsburgh Amtrak service via Cumberland, Md., on the B&O. Region IV advocated it as part of a Cleveland-DC run, and VI urged a Detroit-Toledo-Cleveland-DC run.

Regions IX and XII both called upon Amtrak to adopt an accounting system which avoids arbitrary assignment to individual routes of costs which are not clearly attributable to those routes and avoidable upon their discontinuance. It is believed that the assignment of certain overhead costs on a trainmile basis is misleading and makes long-haul trains appear more costly than they are. For example, allocation of the reservation system costs on a trainmile basis would be unfair to trains with an above-average revenue per ticket (i.e. the long-hauls).

Newly elected Directors follow (*indicates person not already on the Board at election time):

Region I (New England)—William Ensign III, Westfield, MA; William Hennessey, Georgetown, ME; C.N. Monaghan, St. Albans, VT; Samuel E. Stokes, Jr., Alstead, NH; James M.S. Ullman, Meriden, CT.

Region II (New York)—Lettie Gay Carson, Millerton; John Crate*, Oneonta; George Lovi*, Bohemia; Rogers E.M. Whitaker, New York City.

Region III (NJ, DE, Eastern PA)—James F. Farny, Newark, DE; Harry Hyde*, Bryn Mawr, PA; Lawrence T. Joyce*, Enola, PA; Thomas C. Southerland, Jr., Princeton, NJ.

Region IV (DC, MD, VA, WV)—Peter B. Bell, DC; John D. Heffner*, Alexandria, VA; Joseph F. Horning, Jr., DC; Lorena F. Lemons, Silver Spring, MD.

Region V (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, Eastern LA)—Charles A. Dunn*, Coral Gables, FL; Lee E. McIlvaine, Jacksonville, FL;

Amtrak's Board of Directors has approved the first phase of a \$38 million program to modernize Amtrak's Chicago maintenance yards. Phase I, the first of three, will cost \$6.8 million, with remaining funds to be covered by future capital grant appropriations. The entire project is due to be completed by 1981.

The Board also approved construction of a \$1 million track connection in Richmond, VA for the New York-Washington-Newport News "Colonial." This \$1 million investment will reduce Amtrak's operating expenses by \$106,000 per year. The train is no longer "experimental".

John R. Martin, Atlanta; Edwin P. Patton, Knoxville, TN.

Region VI (MI, OH, Western PA)—John DeLora, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI; Dean E. Denlinger*, Tipp City, OH; John Guidinger*, Jackson, MI; Ronald C. VanderKooi*, Grand Rapids, MI; Robert G. Wickens, Elyria, OH.

Region VII (IL, IN, WI)—Edward H. Bennett, Jr., Ronald Peck Boardman, Jr., Chicago; William H. Bryan, Alton, IL; George E. McCallum, West DePere, WI; Robert G. Moorhead, Indianapolis, IN; Lawrence Poston, Oak Park, IL.

Region VIII (IA, MN, NB, ND, SD)—Jack Ecker, Des Moines, IA; Michael Kac*, Minneapolis, MN.

Region IX (AR, KS, MO, OK, TX, Western LA)—James R. Gough, Houston; M.D. (Dan) Monaghan, Garland, TX; R.E. (Doc) Waters, Wichita Falls, TX.

Region X (CO, WY, UT)—G. Alvin Williams, Jr.*, Denver.

Region XI (AK, HI, ID, MT, OR, WA, Northern CA, Northern NV)—Robert W. Glover*, San Francisco; Arthur L. Lloyd, Portola Valley, CA; Helen R. Nelson, Saratoga, CA; Paul Phillips, Spokane, WA; Fred A. Stindt, Redwood City, CA.

Region XII (AZ, NM, Southern CA, Southern NV)—Charles Montooth, Scottsdale, AZ; Ed Von Nordeck*, Riverside, CA; Philip K. Reiner-Deutsch, Los Angeles; Alfred Runte, Goleta, CA.

Connecticut residents are urged to write to their state legislators, asking them to vote and work for passage of House Bill No. 7004. The bill empowers the state commissioner of transportation to contract with Amtrak for "403(b)" service on the Inland Route (Boston-New York via Hartford), and to work out cost-sharing agreements with the other states. (Under Sec. 403b of the Amtrak law, Amtrak will operate a new route at the request of a state or local agency which pays half the costs.) The bill also provides that, "beginning in 1978, and each year thereafter, passenger service must be commenced on a two-year experimental basis" on any one of these routes: Waterbury-Hartford, Worcester-New London, Middletown- or Old Saybrook-Hartford, New London-New Haven local service, Cheshire-New Haven, and Willimantic-Hartford. The commissioner would decide at the end of the two-year period "if the service shall be permanent or discontinued."

Hopes for Los Angeles' first commuter train were dashed as Santa Fe won an arbitration award which allows it to continue refusing to operate what would have been another Amtrak 403(b) train on the LA-San Diego line. As we noted in our April, 1976 issue: "it is . . . intolerable for a private company to withhold . . . tracks from performing a needed social function when the agency sponsoring that function is offering the company a legally acceptable compensation."

NARP hopes that Santa Fe will quickly change its mind, making unnecessary the present discussions about using the equipment acquired by Los Angeles County on a different, less popular schedule.

Amtrak handles thousands of short-haul commuters daily in many regions east of the Mississippi — in most cases without any state or local funding — and it is grossly unfair to deny equal treatment to Los Angeles County, which not only acquired the equipment but was prepared to provide a subsidy (from the state).

But there is also a lesson here for other public agencies which are "would-be" operators of commuter trains: tell the railroad what schedules you want to operate over its tracks before you tell the newspapers!!

SENATE STUDIES TOURISM

Senators Magnuson and Inouye, Chairman of the Commerce Committee and its Foreign Commerce and Tourism Subcommittee, respectively, have invited NARP to participate in a "National Tourism Policy Study" set up for the purpose of "determining a policy and role for the Federal Government on tourism in the United States. . ."

NARP reviewed the results of "Phase I" of the study, a preliminary "blueprint" report prepared for the Committee by an outside consulting firm, and submitted its own 10-page critique of the consultants' report, pointing out and criticizing its pro-highway, anti-rail bias. For the most part, the report simply ignores rail service. But, oblivious to all of the improvements which Amtrak has instituted, it comments: "In the case of rail transport, intercity passenger service has declined markedly in both quantity and quality in the last decade." Not surprisingly, the report endorses former Secretary Coleman's "ax-the-long-hauls" policy.

NARP expects that the next phase of the study will approach the subject in a more balanced way.

"GULF WIND"

"The return of rail passenger service to the Deep South between New Orleans, Louisiana and Jacksonville, Florida along the Gulf Coast presents some definite pluses for inclusion in the Amtrak system. Among these are a route linking seven SMSA's (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area — concentrated population areas of 50,000 or more persons) with an estimated 1977 population of nearly four million persons. . . Only two of these SMSA's have extensive air service. Interstate highway routes are incomplete for the most part, creating congestion in many areas along the route. We feel that the reinstatement of the 'Gulf Wind' rail passenger service to this area would provide balance to the transportation system of this region, and operate economically throughout the entire route. . . It is the purpose of this report to show Amtrak's Board of Directors, the Congressional delegations of the five states involved, and other interested parties the potentials for rail ridership in this region."

—"A Case for the 'Gulf Wind': The Missing Link in the Transcontinental Rail Passenger System of the Southern U.S.", a 43-page study prepared under authorization of the Jackson County (Miss.) Board of Supervisors by the Planning Commission. The study, and the county's interest, is largely the result of efforts of NARP member Steven T. Evans of Gautier, Miss.

BUSES

The financial state of the nation's intercity bus industry is poor and worsening. Trailways and Greyhound brought this message to the ICC on Feb. 2 at a special conference called at the request of the bus industry. Trailways Chairman Fred Curry told the Commission that, without package express revenues, the industry today would be operating in the red. He said that the gap between passenger revenues and operating costs is growing seriously wider.

Curry emphasized problems with financing future equipment replacements and station improvements. The average cost of a new intercity bus, he said, rose from \$48,000 in 1966 to \$90,000 in 1976. Trailways' current return on investment is just over 5%. Curry fears investors would not be willing to put their money in bus transport when they could obtain far greater returns elsewhere. (Similar problems await the airline industry: see the Jan. 3 *Traffic World*, "New Jets for Tomorrow's Traffic: Where's the Money Coming From?") Anticipated increases in labor and fuel costs will further undermine the bus companies' returns on investment.

The bus industry wants the ICC to allow greater flexibility in setting fares. A Commissioner asked Curry if competitive pressures from subsidized air and rail carriers would not defeat the purpose of a fare increase by simply diverting more passengers away from buses to those other modes.

"We are not as affected by those subsidies as you might think," Curry said. It is primarily in the Northeast Corridor, he said, where Amtrak's subsidies affect Trailways' potential revenues. He also noted that there are many areas where competitive pressures do not apply. "If you will give us the latitude to adjust fares," he said, "we can do it even with the subsidized carriers." He stressed that the biggest competitor is the private automobile.

Although the bus executives did not openly admit this, it seems inevitable that their industry will eventually turn to the Congress for direct subsidies, to supplement the indirect highway subsidies it already receives. Airlines, too, can be expected to turn to the public sector for capital financing.

Questions already familiar to NARP members will become much broader in impact: If the private sector cannot support a public transportation system, will it survive? Can you afford to lose it? Will we make do with public highways and private cars, driving selfishly on until all the gas is gone?

Considering The Alternative

"Experienced Traveler" had to go to New York City from Washington by plane for the convenience of an associate, and he found he wasn't all that experienced with the famed Eastern Airlines Shuttle.

At Washington National Airport, from which the Shuttle departs hourly in the daytime for LaGuardia in New York, Experienced Traveler, ticket in hand from a previous-day purchase, sought out a sign he had seen often but not needed for several years — the Metroliner being preferred.

The sign said something like: *Gates 18-20 Shuttle*

But there were not arrows or other directions, so he descended the stairs to gate 20. "Not here, he was told — 18." So, back up the stairs to the corridor, then down another flight of stairs to Gate 18. Trying to be cooperative, he put his briefcase on the belt which apparently would carry it through some all-seeing surveillance machine, and turned to give his ticket to the desk clerk.

"You don't want to check your brief case through, do you?" asked a guard. Of course not, and that belt he had set it on was taking only checked baggage, although no sign or attendant had made it clear.

"Fill out the boarding pass," said the desk clerk as if old Experienced Traveler really was experienced with the ways of the Shuttle staff. He asked why and was told it was needed for the passenger manifest. Persisting, he told the clerk that he had flown regularly all over the country and has not had to fill these out. She relented enough to explain that it is only on the Shuttle. "Only way we can tell who is on board." He filled it out and turned with his briefcase, newspaper and coat to go through the security device which supposedly turns up guns, knives and bombs on erratic passengers. It made no beeping sound, and he thought he had made it.

"Go back through and put your briefcase on the table for checking," he was sternly admonished, and did so. He had read too many stories about a passenger reacting to being ordered about by duty conscious security types by offering a lame or witty retort and winding up in the hands of the law. But he didn't have to be happy about it, and wasn't. So he slammed his briefcase down on the table and walked through again; again recording no protesting "beep." Regardless, the post-juvenile security person

NARP Region VII (Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin) will hold a meeting Sat., March 26, at 10 AM at the Midland Hotel in Chicago. Main topics will be membership, fund-raising, and the establishment of a regional organization.

held him in place while a hand-held electronic gadget was run over his body to see if something suspicious couldn't be found. Nothing was, and eventually he actually got on the plane to New York. His overhead luggage compartment was full of flotation gear, so he held his coat in his lap.

The "stewardesses" spent the trip selling tickets, picking up boarding passes, etc., and suddenly, there was the Big Apple — only a \$12-taxi ride away. After a day of business and another \$12-ride back to the Eastern terminal, Experienced Traveler found he had to await a courtesy shuttle to get to the Shuttle terminal, and barely made the next plane — a sleek, four-engine, prop-driven plane with windows so small and wing so large that there was virtually no view. Then back to Washington, still miles from downtown. The shuttle round-trip fare was \$76, making the transportation part of the trip an even hundred dollars, not counting expenses of taking his car to Washington National and back downtown (and parking all day for \$3.60, half a mile from the terminal).

And from his downtown office, a two-block walk would have gotten him to the Farragut North Metro (subway) station for a six-minute 55-cent (in rush hour) ride to Union Station, a three-hour Metroliner ride to New York (round-trip fare \$46), and another quick subway trip to his business appointment.

Experienced Traveler, sadder but more experienced, goes by train next time.