



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 12, No. 3 March, 1978

417 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003
202-546-1550

Orren Beaty, President
Ross Capon, Executive Director
Thomas G. Crikelair, Assistant Director
Kim Tieger, Circulation Manager

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(No. 2 was mailed March 14)

SVRACICH J 004076083178CP01
JOE VRACICH
1601 N RHODES ST 103
ARLINGTON VA 22209

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Public Supports NARP Goals

82% of the public wants the Government to maintain or increase its spending on improving the quality and availability of rail travel "for trips 300 miles or more one-way". 50% want that spending to increase.

These are the results of a new public opinion survey by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., released by Amtrak on March 14.

In another new survey, released by Secretary Adams on March 24, Hart Research Associates found that Amtrak was supported by over half of those questioned; 3 out of 5 think there are enough

"If and when energy shortages or the threat of energy shortages become more salient, the public mandate and demand for mass transportation and intercity trains will further intensify. The readiness of mass transportation to bear this greater load will depend on the priorities the government sets today."

—Lou Harris, at Mar. 14 news conference

interstate highways; 2 out of 3 think there are enough roads generally.

The Harris survey found "a clear and decisive mandate" to upgrade mass transportation generally, and intercity rail passenger travel in particular. In a list of nine proposed transportation improvements, intercity rail passenger service ranked third behind auto safety and commuter mass transit. New highways, new airports, and faster airplanes were at the bottom of the list.

The poll indicates that the private automobile continues to dominate among intercity modes, with 56% choosing it as their first choice, "realistically speaking", if they were taking a trip of 100 miles or more in the next few weeks. Given the present available services, 6% would choose the train as their first option. But, for 25% of those surveyed, the train would be their first or second choice. Among those who live where some multiple-frequency Amtrak service is available, 9% would choose the train as their first choice and 34% would choose it as either first or second.

33% nationwide expect "people like themselves" to be traveling more by train in the next few years.

Pricing was shown in the survey to be a key determinant for people choosing among modes. Asked to rank a number of proposed rail passenger improvements, respondents placed "on-time service", "more frequent service", and "convenient terminal locations" at the top of the list.

Of those familiar with Amtrak, 55% gave the Corporation a positive rating of excellent or pretty good on performance compared with 40% in Harris's 1972 survey. 38% gave it a negative rating of only fair or poor, compared with 42% in 1972.

When pollster Lou Harris was asked at a March 14 press conference if he could account for the disparity between the numbers of people who want rail passenger service to continue

and improve and numbers who actually use the service now, he immediately pointed to the limited levels of service presently available. The public's attitude toward rail passenger service, he said, reminds him of the attitude towards the nation's airport system before that system was developed: passengers were not flying, but indicated they would—if the facilities and services were provided.

A majority of Americans (55%) reached in the Harris poll believe that train travel will get better in the next few years.

"Southern Crescent" Plot Thickens

It is absolutely essential that the DOT May 1 report include the Washington-New Orleans route. Otherwise, the "Southern Crescent" could well be the first long-distance route to be discontinued. Therefore, all NARP members should write to President Carter and Secretary Adams (Washington, DC 20500 and 20590, respectively) demanding inclusion of this route in that report. Insist that, if the report consists of alternatives, the "Crescent" be included in all alternatives.

Those wishing to be heard by or to testify before the Interstate Commerce Commission on the question of whether "public convenience and necessity" requires continued operation of the "Southern Crescent" may write to the Secretary of the Commission, Washington, DC 20423, referring to Finance Docket 28697. Public hearings are expected during May, at which time NARP expects to argue that SR's discontinuance proposal should be denied at least until the route restructuring process is complete. (Under the law, the Commission's order could in no event be effective for longer than 12 months.)

Southern (SR) must continue to operate its Washington-Atlanta-New Orleans "Southern Crescent" at least through August 6 since the ICC decided to investigate SR's discontinuance proposal. The ICC action came in response to protests filed by NARP and others.

Prospects for Amtrak and SR to reach agreement on terms of an Amtrak takeover of the train remain uncertain. At its March 29 meeting, the Amtrak Board, on a motion by new member Harry Edwards, voted to table the matter until after the May 1 DOT route structure report was available.

The Board's action appears to be in line with the views of Secretary Adams, but not those of SR. In the wake of the Board's March 1 rejection of an Amtrak/SR proposed agreement, which then had the blessing of Amtrak President Paul Reistrup, SR

(cont. on p. 4)

A New Shot At The Highway Trust Fund

The Federal Highway Trust Fund expires this year, and the fight is on again to increase availability of these dollars for mass transit, and to reduce their availability for new highway construction.

The Highway Action Coalition (HAC), which played a major role in the 1973 trust fund fight, has been reconstituted as a program of Environmental Action, Inc., and the coalition so far includes Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, Environmental Policy Center, and—per a recent NARP Executive Committee decision—NARP.

In 1973, the fight resulted in giving to Governors and local officials the "Interstate transfer" option, allowing the cancellation of plans for certain Interstate highway segments and the use of Federal funds saved thereby on other transportation projects, including mass transit. Also, flexibility was added permitting the use of the trust fund's "Urban Systems" monies for mass transit capital projects.

This year, HAC expects to support a bill being drafted jointly by HAC and the offices of Senators Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) and Lowell P. Weicker (R-CT) which probably will:

- Make all Federal highway funds available for routine highway maintenance and mass transit (including operating subsidies, to the extent permitted by the Urban Mass

Fares on most Amtrak routes will rise about 2½% on April 30, but the increases will be slightly less on one-way fares presently under \$25. In addition, 15 routes, mostly long-distance, will be hit with "peak period charges" from June 15 through Sept. 5. These surcharges will be as high as \$40 for double sleeping accommodations on long Western trips.

Transportation Act), instead of reserving them largely for new highway construction. Demands for these new uses of the money, including pothole repairs!, are so great that, given this new flexibility in the use of the money, many states and localities can be expected to scrap plans for new highways;

- Require that an "alternatives analysis" be done before any project could be approved. This analysis, already required by the Federal government for transit projects, must consider all modes, and that mode must be chosen which meets the transportation need while doing the least damage to Federal interests regarding the environment, energy consumption, and social and economic factors;

- Prohibit projects which would make it more difficult for an urban area violating air quality standards to come into compliance with those standards;

- Permit "Interstate transfer" projects to be funded at the same ratio (90% Federal) as Interstate highways. Currently, if a state wants to transfer Interstate money to a transit project, a less favorable ratio (80% Federal) applies. In other words, the same number of Federal dollars requires twice the amount of state/local matching funds (20% instead of 10%) when applied to transit projects than when applied to Interstate highways, and this discourages use of the transfer mechanism.

- Environmental impact statements would be required where a highway is widened, even if the highway department already owns the right-of-way.

The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, preceded by its Subcommittee on Transportation, will be marking up highway legislation during April, and the resulting bill will go to the Senate floor sometime after May 15. Environmentalists are not hopeful about making progress on this in the House, and a tough House/Senate conference fight is expected this summer.

Chairman of the Senate Committee is Jennings Randolph (D-WV); Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX) is the subcommittee chairman. Other committee (*subcommittee) members are: Muskie, Gravel, Burdick*, Culver*, Hart, Anderson, Moynihan*, Stafford*, Baker, McClure, Domenici*, Chafee*, and Wallop.

NARP members are urged to write to their own Senators in

Amtrak Needs Capital Funds

—EDITORIAL—

If this nation wants a healthy passenger train system for the future, it must invest the required capital funds now. Capital investment in passenger cars, locomotives, mail/baggage cars, maintenance facilities, stations, and tracks are needed now—to enable Amtrak to reduce operating costs while increasing frequencies, ridership, and revenues during the years ahead.

The true test of any public official's good faith in arguing the long-term importance of Amtrak is his or her attitude toward current capital financing. Cutting back on today's capital money amounts to directly undermining the foundation upon which tomorrow's system depends.

Without new and rebuilt passenger cars, maintenance and upkeep costs for the older long-distance fleet will become unbearable. Without additional locomotives, increased frequencies will not be possible. Without more mail/baggage cars, revenue-generating mail contracts will be lost. Without rebuilt and consolidated maintenance facilities, maintenance will remain unreliable and unacceptably costly.

The nation needs trains that serve more people and trains that are less expensive to operate. Intelligent capital planning and investment are the key to both.

Amtrak's capital request for FY 1979 includes items essential for any nationwide Amtrak system. **In writing to your legislators, insist on the \$341 million capital funding for Amtrak in FY '79 which is contained in the Staggers bill (HR 11493).**

The Amtrak Board on March 29 appointed a committee to find a replacement for Amtrak President Paul H. Reistrup, who is not seeking reelection and whose term expires June 30. William J. Quinn of the Milwaukee Road is chairman of the committee.

Alan Boyd, former Illinois Central president, is said to be Secretary Adams' choice to succeed Reistrup.

About 4,000 people came out to attend the March 4 opening ceremonies for Amtrak's new passenger station between Minneapolis and St. Paul, which replaces the one in downtown Minneapolis. Officers of the Minnesota Association of Railroad Passengers were on hand, and speakers included local dignitaries as well as NARP President Orren Beaty.

The Minnesota ARP recently issued two documents: "Rail Passenger Service for a Mobile Minnesota", available for 75¢ from the Association at P.O. Box 375, Minneapolis, Minn. 55440; and "Rebuttal of Minnesota Department of Transportation Report on Amtrak Service Between the Twin Cities and Duluth-Superior".

In the first document, some routes are proposed beyond those shown in the NARP "10-year plan" (map, Jan. News): Minneapolis-Omaha via Worthington, Minn., and Sioux City, Ia.; and two additional "alternatives" to be considered: Twin Cities-Winnipeg via Duluth and International Falls; and Twin Cities—Fargo via St. Cloud/Sauk Centre/Alexandria/Fergus Falls.

In the "rebuttal", Minn. ARP shows that the state DOT document which attacked the "Arrowhead" cited a state subsidy per passenger more than twice the current level. This was achieved by averaging the entire history of the run instead of concentrating on the most recent months.

support of the Kennedy/Weicker amendments, and in opposition to the Carter Administration's proposal to terminate the Interstate transfer mechanism in 1984. Although the latter is part of an Administration plan to end the Interstate program and its 90% Federal funding by FY '86, environmentalists fear that the Interstate transfer mechanism might disappear on schedule, but that the concrete lobby would rise up to continue the Interstate program beyond 1986—without the flexibility which the transfer mechanism allows. Congress has set dates in the past for ending the Interstate construction program, only to extend the program as those dates approached.

NARP Testifies on Authorizing Bills

NARP testified during March before Commerce Subcommittees of both the House and Senate, commenting on three bills dealing with FY '79 Amtrak authorizations: S. 2478 by Senator Long; H.R. 11493 by Rep. Staggers; and H.R. 11089 by Rep. McFall. NARP strongly opposed the latter.

On March 13, NARP's Ross Capon appeared before Russell Long (D-LA), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, and expressed appreciation for S. 2478 which he called "excellent". Capon said that he had only two changes to propose.

Capon specifically endorsed provisions that would increase Amtrak mail revenues, get pets back on the trains, and continue Amtrak funding at a level sufficient to carry the existing system through the end of FY '79 (Sept. 30, 1979), including \$633 million for operations.

He suggested removing a provision in the bill that would suspend the ICC's Adequacy of Service regulations until the new

Rep. Ronald A. Sarasin (R-CT), who was absent from the Nov. 30 vote of the House on Amtrak, indicates that, if he had been present, he would have voted pro-Amtrak on all three roll calls.

route structure is implemented: "We do not believe rail consumer interests would be well served by a suspension of the ICC regulations. . . . The route structure review process does not require a blanket suspension of the regulations."

Capon also proposed changing the mechanism for Congressional action on the DOT's final route-structure recommendation. "We believe," he said, "that implementation of the new route structure should be contingent upon approval by Congress by means of a concurrent resolution. [Concurrent resolutions require positive action by both the House and the Senate.] This would be in contrast to S. 2478 as now written which provides that the plan would take effect unless either the House or the Senate passed a resolution of disapproval." He noted that positive action was similarly required in that section of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 dealing with estimates used to apportion Interstate highway funds among the states.

On March 20, NARP's Tom Crikelair appeared before the Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee to comment on the House bills. He expressed NARP's strong endorsement of H.R. 11493, introduced by Harley Staggers (D-WV), chairman of the full Committee, and co-sponsored by John E. Moss (D-CA); John D. Dingell (D-MI); Paul G. Rogers (D-FL); Fred B. Rooney (D-PA), the subcommittee chairman; John M. Murphy (D-NY); Charles J. Carney (D-OH); and Ralph H. Metcalfe (D-IL). This list includes six of the seven most senior Democrats on the full Committee.

Crikelair endorsed the provision in the Staggers bill requiring affirmative votes on the Administration's route-structure recommendations before they could become effective, the exact provision which NARP had earlier suggested to the Senate Subcommittee. By contrast, under the McFall bill (H.R. 11089) the DOT plan would automatically go into effect unless resolutions of disapproval were passed by both House and Senate within 60 days after the final plan is submitted. Not surprisingly, the DOT supports this provision. Also, the McFall bill does not call for public hearings and allows less time for public review of the preliminary report than do the Staggers and Long bills (90 days vs. 150 days).

Crikelair opposed the reorganization and virtual elimination of the Amtrak Board of Directors as proposed in the McFall bill. He told the Committee: "To eliminate the voice of the consumer on the Board, and to increase the influence of the private railroad companies, many of which have helped to contribute to Amtrak's problems, is senseless in our view."

He was critical of language in the McFall bill which would set the stage for requiring higher fares, and pointed out that the bill

also neglected to include provisions for public hearings regarding the Administration's route structure proposals. He also took issue with the "inadequate" Amtrak funding levels proposed in the McFall bill, pointing out that Amtrak must not be forced to discontinue trains at the same time that the review process is being carried out.

Crikelair also emphasized NARP's support for the capital funding proposed in the Staggers bill. H.R. 11493 calls for \$341 million for Amtrak capital grants, the full amount requested by Amtrak. The Senate bill includes \$200 million, while the President's budget shows \$101 million.

House Committee members will be under great pressure from the Administration to compromise on the capital funding, so letters to them specifically endorsing \$341 million are appropriate. The two major items not included in the Administration's recommendation are new passenger cars for Eastern long-distance trains (the Administration wants to defer funding these cars until after the route study process is completed), and light-weight electric locomotives (the Administration wants to see "more studies"). These locomotives are desirable because they will be the only power capable of running Amfleet cars in the Northeast Corridor at the 120 mph speeds for which the cars were designed and for which the track improvements are now being undertaken. But the locomotives are essential because Amtrak does not today have enough electric locomotives to handle even the present levels of service after the changeover to a new voltage renders the GG-1's obsolete.

Some key NARP positions were supported by ICC Chairman A. Daniel O'Neal, who also testified before the Committees. Testifying before the House Subcommittee, O'Neal supported the Staggers approach to route restructuring rather than the McFall one. He also opposed McFall's plan to eliminate consumer representation from the Amtrak Board and increase the railroads' voice. Under McFall's bill, the Board would consist only of the Secretaries of Transportation and the Treasury, and a railroad representative.

Before the Senate, O'Neal opposed suspension of the Adequacy of Service regulations, and suggested an alternative under which "Amtrak would be allowed during the 12-month implementation period to apply for an exemption from specific

Those wishing to join the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners, Inc., should contact its President, Roy F. Thorpe, at P.O. Box 1211, Mountainside, NJ 07092 (201/233-5000).

regulations on specific routes with a 30-day deadline for action by the Commission. . . . If the Commission failed to respond within 30 days, the exemption would automatically be granted."

The DOT appears to be moving slowly towards a more flexible position regarding Amtrak operating funds for both FY '78 and '79. Federal Railroad Administrator John M. Sullivan testified: "As a matter of information . . . I can inform you that as a part of a railroad bill shortly to be proposed by the Department, we will suggest that the FY 1979 authorizing legislation provide for 'such sums as are necessary' for (Amtrak) operating purposes. As you know, the President's budget provides for a Fiscal Year 1979 operating appropriation of \$510 million for Amtrak. We recognize that if other legislative efforts to freeze Amtrak's present system in place, pending the completion of the route study, are successful, that \$510 million will be inadequate to support Amtrak operations in FY '79."

On March 14, Deputy Federal Railroad Administrator Robert E. Gallamore had told the House Subcommittee: "If the Congress adopted as part of the FY 79 authorization . . . a mechanism for implementing the study recommendations of DOT similar to the provision in S. 2478, I believe that the Department would be prepared to support a freeze of the present system pending a final decision by Congress on a new structure. I am sure that this Subcommittee is well aware that such a freeze, which would continue at least through January 1979, would require additional appropriations for FY 78 and FY 79."

"Southern Crescent" (cont. from p. 1)

moved quickly to try to reverse the Board's position.

A March 7 letter signed by 32 legislators (listed below) was sent to Secy. Adams, with copies to other Amtrak Board members. It said, "In our opinion, it is in the public interest that the trains be continued by Amtrak. . . . In addition, we hope the Department of Transportation will support House Concurrent Resolution No. 494 at the hearings, in the House and Senate."

Resolution 494, which was whisked through Congress by March 15, was designed to make it clear to Amtrak that Congress was not opposed to an early Amtrak takeover of the "Crescent". This was in response to a feeling among Amtrak Board members that Congress had frozen the Amtrak system when it ordered the route structure study.

SR apparently believed continuation of the "Crescent" was inevitable, but wanted to reach an early agreement providing for Amtrak takeover of the train and its deficits (which SR claims to be \$560,000/month) without ICC proceedings and adverse publicity. SR's proposal, according to the March 7 letter, is to give to Amtrak SR's 17 passenger locomotives and 81 passenger cars—or to substitute \$4 million if Amtrak does not want the equipment—and to give Amtrak \$2.7 million to cover "Crescent" operating costs for the balance of FY 1978 (through Sept. 30).

At a March 14 hearing on Res. 494, Deputy Federal Railroad Administrator Robert E. Gallamore told the House Commerce Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce that "we do not believe that Congressional action as is proposed in House Concurrent Resolution 494 is required at this time. . . . We do not believe as a matter of law that Amtrak needs explicit Congressional authorization to agree (with Southern). . . . We also believe, however, that any decision on this route should be made in the context of the route structure which will be recommended by the Department of Transportation. The preliminary proposed route structure will be presented to the Congress by May 1." Subsequently, the Administration made a low-key, and short-lived, attempt to prevent the House from voting on the resolution.

NARP's Ross Capon, at the same hearing, supported the resolution as well as long-term continuation of the "Crescent". He indicated that NARP's only objection to the SR proposed agreement with Amtrak was its failure to give Amtrak, as a matter of contractual right, the ability to increase service frequencies on the "Crescent" route or to add service on other SR lines. Amtrak has such rights in its contracts with railroads which joined Amtrak in 1971.

Each agreement with those railroads establishes a cost methodology for both existing Amtrak services and those which might be added during the term of the contract on any facilities of the particular company. If Amtrak and a company fail to agree on the precise amount payable for a new service on the basis of the cost methodology in the contract, the matter is settled by an arbitration panel consisting of one chairman, who sits continuously, plus one representative each from Amtrak and the railroad company involved.

It is true, as Southern was quick to point out at the Rooney hearing, that Section 402(a) of the Amtrak law requires the ICC, "if it finds that doing so is necessary to carry out the purposes of (the Rail Passenger Service Act), (to) order the provision of services or the use of tracks or facilities of (any) railroad by (Amtrak) on such terms . . . as the Commission may fix as just and reasonable."

However, the arbitration panel's job is simply to implement agreed upon contractual rights, whereas the ICC must make its own judgment as to whether the service is necessary to carry out the purposes of the Amtrak law. Also, the Commission starts each Amtrak case from scratch, whereas the panel works exclusively on Amtrak contract disputes with its operating railroads. Amtrak's record before the Commission is discouraging; in fact, if ICC's Texas & Pacific compensation decision is not eventually reversed, its effect will be to drastically increase Amtrak payments to railroads nationwide.

Thus the advantage of Amtrak's reluctance to sign a contract with SR to date is that the possibility still exists of expanding

Amtrak's rights in the contract, though SR insists this issue is not negotiable. This possibility, of course, relates directly to the need to reroute the Chicago-Florida service through Atlanta, using SR tracks all or part of the way between Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Macon. The disadvantage of having no agreement is that SR's offers of cash and equipment may soon disappear and, in the event of an adverse ICC decision, the "Crescent" itself might be lost after August 6, particularly if the May DOT report does not make it clear that DOT favors continued service on the route.

Senators who signed the March 7 letter were: Talmadge; Huddleston; Ford; Sasser; Sparkman; Morgan; Thurmond; Eastland; Johnson; Baker; Stennis; and Helms. Representatives were: John J. Flynt, Jr. (D-GA); Bo Ginn (D-GA); James H. Quillen (R-TN); Kenneth L. Holland (D-SC); Harold E. Ford (D-TN);

The Governor of Missouri, Mayor of St. Louis, and Supervisor of St. Louis County have declared April 17-23 Rail Passenger Week.

Marilyn L. Lloyd (D-TN); Edgar L. Jenkins (D-GA); Clifford Allen (D-TN); W. Wyche Fowler (D-GA); Billy Lee Evans (D-GA); Trent Lott (R-MS); Elliott H. Levitas (D-GA); Lawrence P. McDonald (D-GA); Ed Jones (D-TN); Tim Lee Carter (R-KY); Richardson Preyer (D-NC); W.G. Hefner (D-NC); Stephen L. Neal (D-NC); James D. Santini (D-NV); and Thomas A. Luken (D-OH).

Although Russell Long (D-LA) was not among the signators, his questioning at the March 10 Amtrak authorization hearing before the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Transportation, which he chairs, made clear his displeasure with Amtrak's failure to approve the contract with SR on March 1.

April 30 Timetable Change

Amtrak's April 30 timetable change brings more good news. The Chicago-Laredo "Inter-American" schedule will be two hours shorter south of St. Louis because Missouri Pacific finally agreed to raise its passenger speed limits. (There will be some late running at first, since it will take a few weeks to readjust signs and grade crossing protection for the higher speeds.) The speeds will be as reported in the Aug. News, ranging up to 75 mph, except that the San Antonio-Laredo segment will be 59 instead of 55 mph after new rail is installed, and will range between 40 and 59 until that work is done. The northbound train will leave Laredo at 6:10 AM instead of 3:55 AM.

"The Inter-American" will run daily from Chicago May 24-Sept. 6 and from Laredo May 26-Sept. 8, after which it will return to tri-weekly. Sleeping car service will be restored on the overnight (Chicago-Ft. Worth) segment on a tri-weekly basis from June 25 (leaving Chicago Sun., Wed., Fri.; Ft. Worth Sun., Tues., Fri.). But the ICC still requires daily sleeper service. Amtrak on Jan. 16 asked the Commission to reverse its Nov. 3 denial of Amtrak's request to drop the sleeper requirement. NARP filed a statement March 27 opposing Amtrak, noting that low ridership undoubtedly stems from the exceptionally poor on-time performance of the "Inter-American".

The new MoPac speeds will take 15 minutes out of the running time of the "National Ltd." between St. Louis and Kansas City.

Chicago-Seattle schedules will be "flipped" by about 12 hours, restoring Seattle connections to all points, San Diego to Vancouver, and restoring daylight operation through the best scenery and to the southern Montana cities. The unfortunate loss of same-day Eastern connections in Chicago seems unavoidable, given today's track conditions and service frequencies.

Transcontinental passengers who wish to avoid a night in a Chicago hotel can, however, speed a day in the Twin Cities and use the other Chicago-Twin Cities train, which will become a night train (with sleeper) running through to and from Duluth. This should mark the beginning of reliable overnight service on the fun. The present Chicago-Twin Cities overnight service—because it originates in Seattle—has been too late too often east-bound to attract business travel.

The "Pioneer" will have sleeping car service added starting April 30 from Seattle and May 1 from Salt Lake City. The train links those cities by way of Portland, Boise, and Ogden, where a connection is made with Amtrak's Chicago-Oakland train.