

“We at Amtrak understand the steps that must be taken to ensure a safe and reliable railway and will be working throughout the summer and beyond to make the required improvements.”

AMTRAK PRESIDENT AND CEO WICK MOORMAN ON NEW YORK PENN STATION UPGRADES

Transportation Funding Secured For Rest Of FY2017

The president signed a congressional omnibus budget agreement into law May 5th, securing increased transportation funding for Amtrak, intercity rail, and transit for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2017. The spending deal had broad, bipartisan support in the House and the Senate, and is a resounding rejection of extreme spending cuts outlined by the White House in its proposed FY2018 budget.

The ease with which the 2017 budget moved through both congressional bodies is proof of the power of committed advocacy. Without the dedicated action of NARP members and the national passenger rail coalition over the past two months, increased investment in trains and transit would not have made the final deal -- NARP members made nearly 6,000 legislative contacts in six weeks.

However, the fight is not over.

“We are excited and happy to see that both Democrats and Republicans could come together to support this bill,” said NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews. “This deal highlights that local communities and federal representatives are taking the future of transportation in our country seriously. We need everyone’s support to ensure that next year’s budget builds on this success.”

With the government funded through the end of September 2017, NARP will now turn to the FY2018 budget process. This is where we will continue to fight for fully authorized funding levels provided for in the FAST Act. There are already a number of obstacles emerging.

To begin with, time will be a factor. Having eaten up a large portion of the **FUNDING**, p. 3

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“Day On The Hill” A Success For NARP Members

April 25th marked another successful series of meetings between elected officials, their staffers, and NARP members and Council Representatives. For NARP’s “Day on the Hill” more than 100 members came to Washington D.C. to represent the needs of communities across America which are looking to develop, maintain, and even expand rail and transit services.

“We had tremendous support from NARP members who, over the course of the day, shared important messages and points about the need for critical federal support,” said NARP



NARP Chairman Peter LeCody and NARP President Jim Mathews, Present U.S. Rep. Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH) with the Golden Spike Award (Photo Credit: NARP)

President and CEO Jim Mathews. “Support can come in many different forms, such as policies and funding, but our representatives need to know that each is vital for the future of our country’s transportation infrastructure.”

During hundreds of meetings between NARP and federal officials, three key points were emphasized for “A Connected America.” Members encouraged elected officials to look towards the future of Amtrak, passenger rail, and public transit services in the U.S.

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The Chairman's Column...

A View on "Day on the Hill"

This year's, "Day on the Hill," was among the most successful events in anyone's memory. This is largely because the FAST Act put transportation funding front and center. We have never before experienced the reception we got from both staffers and your elected legislators.

More than that, the Congressional Reception we hosted on April 25th had more elected officials attend and speak about their support for passenger rail than we have ever seen.

We were buoyed by a wide range of bi-partisan legislators who expressed ardent support for a national passenger rail network.

Despite the usual warnings of cuts from Administrations that we have heard before,

we must still keep our guard up until the current budget process is completed.

An exciting moment at the Summit was the unveiling of how NARP will be "rebranded" over the coming months.

In order for us to reach the next generations that will be rail passengers we have to change with the times. We will still be the National Association of Railroad Passengers, but the new look and feel will tell everyone we are Rail Passengers first.

I can't say enough about how your D.C. staff worked so hard putting together the Summit and Hill visit. I know that the rest



NARP members participate in Congressional Reception (Photo Credit: NARP).

of our Directors join with me in thanking Jim Mathews, Sean Jeans-Gail, Bruce Becker, Abe Zumwalt, Carolyn Stagger Cokley, Betsy Nelson and Alicia Guinn for their efforts.

Each year with our new staggered

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Amtrak To Repair Penn Station Tracks This Summer

In the wake of recent track issues at New York Penn Station, which resulted in two separate derailments of NJ Transit and Amtrak trains, Amtrak President and CEO Wick Moorman announced that the agency would no longer put off repairs. This is a change of plans for the agency, since officials were aware of track issues at Penn Station, but did not believe repairs were needed.

"The simple fact of the matter is that some of the track and infrastructure in service today at Penn Station was built in the 1970s at a time when we were handling half the trains and a third of the customers that we do today," Moorman said in a press release. "While a substantial amount of reconstruction has already been done at New York Penn Station, the remaining renewal work has been scheduled to take place over the next several years in order to minimize impacts on scheduled services. We can't wait that long. This work needs to be done now."

Although Amtrak has not officially announced the timeline of its upgrade

plans for Penn Station, documents obtained by Bloomberg revealed that work will take place between July 7th, July 25th, August 4th and August 28th.

The scheduled 44 days of work have some of the 600,000 riders who travel through Penn Station, as well as elected officials, concerned that the work will cause major delays and congestion on weekdays for those who ride Amtrak, NJ Transit, and LIRR trains.

"Why not schedule some of the work for the last week of August when so many people take off from work heading into Labor Day weekend?," asked Senator Bob Gordon, a Democrat from Fair Lawn, NJ.

The concerns raised about weekday work have been heard, but safety is and should be the highest concern, according to NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews.

"Penn Station is a vital piece of the Northeast Corridor and our national rail network overall, and it cannot be stressed enough that the steps taken here by Amtrak will pay off for the future of our

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New 5-Year Plan Finds \$38 Billion Needed To Keep NEC Running

The Northeast Corridor (NEC) is a vital link for millions of travelers connecting between Washington, D.C. and Boston, MA. It is also a critical driver of the economy with \$3 trillion in economic output generated each year. Any logjam, backup, repair project or even a minor derailment, can have significant ramifications that directly impacts daily commutes and the growth of the country's economy.

This was made evident in both March and April as New York's Penn Station experienced two separate derailments involving NJ Transit and Amtrak trains. The resulting ripple effect led to delayed commutes and lost productivity for thousands of people traveling through the station. *For additional details on Amtrak's efforts to repair Penn Station, please read "Amtrak To Move Forward Immediately with Penn Station Repairs" on page 2.*

These types of losses could eventually become the norm if \$38 billion in state-of-good-repair projects are not addressed, according to the Northeast Corridor Commission and the agency's new NEC Capital Investment Plan.

Connecticut Transportation Commissioner James Redeker, co-chairman of the Northeast Corridor Commission, wrote in the Investment Plan, "The corridor's aging infrastructure is already subject to service disruptions caused by infrastructure failures, rail-traffic congestion, and other factors that cost the economy \$500 million per year in lost productivity. A loss of all NEC services for just one day could cost the economy an estimated \$100 million."

The plan closely looks at the NEC's infrastructure and funding

needs for fiscal years 2018-2022, and gives priority to projects that, "include basic infrastructure backlog elimination to ramp up the replacement of older assets like signal and electric power supply systems that date back to the 1930s and major backlog projects that would replace the NEC's century-plus-old bridges and tunnels that are quickly deteriorating and at risk of severing service."

A major example of this is Amtrak's Gateway project, which looks to repair the 107-year-old Hudson River tunnel, and build a new rail tunnel between New York and New Jersey. Currently, Amtrak's repair backlog contains \$10 billion for the Gateway project, based on information provided by the Commission.

"Some may see '\$38 billion' and get sticker shock," said NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews. "But this is what happens when we don't put resources

towards maintaining, let alone advancing, the busiest rail lines in the country. We need to pay close attention to the recommendations made by the Commission in order to bring the NEC back to a state of good repair that is safe and reliable, and will be able to meet the growing demands from passengers in the next several years."

Spending \$38 billion on repairs is only a recommendation made by the Commission should federal funding become available. Over the next five years, regardless if federal dollars are provided, \$3.3 billion will be invested by Amtrak, commuter lines and states (MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, and MD, as well as DC) for basic infrastructure and maintenance.



MARC and Amtrak trains travel along the NEC.
(Photo Credit: Northeast Corridor Commission)

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calendar dealing with the holdover FY2017 bill, appropriators have already missed the April 15th deadline for an agreement on the top-line budget numbers. The House and Senate are trying to settle on a budget resolution by June, which leaves only a month to work before the scheduled August recess.

There are also more substantive points of disagreement. Even though GOP leaders have responded to the public outcry over cuts to programs proposed by President Trump—such as the Amtrak long-distance routes—the Republican caucus seems open to the \$54 billion in increased military spending outlined by the White House. If the GOP attempts to pay for that military bump through cuts to discretionary spending, they'll lose Democrats,

who proved instrumental in passing the FY2017 omnibus; while that bill passed easily, 309-118, 103 of the 'No' votes were cast by Republicans. House Speaker Paul Ryan will have to determine whether he sticks to the center, or appeases his far-right flank.

In the end, that makes this month's victory all the more important. If Congress has to resort to yet another Continuing Resolution in September on October 1, passengers have safeguarded increased investment in Amtrak and transit, as well as locked-in funding for the new FAST Act rail grants.

FY 2017 Rail and Transit Funding Figures

The omnibus agreement reached this month includes \$18.5

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STATES NEWS • STATES NEWS • STATES NEWS • STATES NEWS

Now that the Regional Transportation District (RTD) in Denver has corrected crossing gate glitches on its A and B lines, the agency can move forward with testing trains on its G Line. The G Line was originally set to open last October, but the FRA required the RTD to solve the gate issues first. Since the correction, the FRA has authorized “limited” testing and operator training on the G Line, which will run from Arvada to Wheat Ridge.

Northern Louisiana is one step closer to getting Amtrak passenger rail, as Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards has come out in favor of restoring the service to the cities of Ruston and Monroe. While there is no guarantee that passenger rail will come

to Northern Louisiana, negotiations are underway with Amtrak and additional freight railways. The alternative mode of travel will come as a relief, as congestion plagues the area’s highways.

In New York, the Buffalo Station Site Committee decided that a new station for the city will be located downtown, as opposed to at the historic Buffalo Central Terminal. New York State has committed \$25 million dollars for a new facility, which is anticipated to cost at least \$35 million. Eleven of the 17-person selection committee voted in favor of building the station downtown, meeting Governor Cuomo’s six-month timeframe to resolve the issue. ■

Private Investments In Rail Move Forward

Over the past month, privatized rail agencies and projects from Florida to Texas have seen growth in support and investment from community members and elected officials. From new trainsets to rejection of lawsuits, high-speed rail projects are taking steps forward.

“There are multiple high-speed rail projects developing throughout the country, and we’re excited to see their progress, as well as new levels of connectivity for people,” said NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews.

“Hundreds of our members, as well as local communities have voiced their support for these projects, and we have seen opposing litigation be rejected. It’s a great sign that people’s voices are being heard.”

While the private sector won’t be able to address infrastructure needs in every travel corridor, the increased interest from businesses in servicing the rapidly increasing demand for alternatives to overcrowded roads and airports is a positive sign for passengers. Notable updates regarding high-speed rail projects includes:

All Aboard Florida Brightline - Brightline is poised to welcome two additional new trainsets, BrightGreen and BrightOrange, highlighting increased support from Florida’s state legislature. The benefits would greatly aid the state of Florida, which could lead to the creation of 10,000 direct construction jobs, and generate over \$650 million in federal, state, and local tax revenue. The line also has the ability to take three million automobiles off the crowded Interstate 95 corridor. Additionally, the city council of Orlando approved a resolution that called on state lawmakers to reject bills HB 269 and SB 386, which would hinder the development of the project. The decisive factor in the council’s decision was the project’s potential to create jobs and spur economic



A glimpse of the new BrightOrange train.
(Photo Credit: Brightline).

development for the city.

Texas Central Partners - Despite facing legislation from the state’s government that could halt the development of a high-speed rail line between Dallas and Houston, Texas Central have reached option agreements on about 30 percent of the parcels estimated to be needed for the line’s route, which covers 10 counties between the two cities. Notably, 50 percent of the parcels for the proposed route in Waller and Grimes counties have reached an agreement. The private company credits “collaborative and ongoing engagements with property owners and stakeholders” for their progress. ■

NARP Member Benefits

■ If you haven't done so already, claim your Travelers United Advocate Membership, and broaden support for consumer focus, at: <https://travelersunited.org/welcome-narp/>

■ Review the full and growing list of NARP benefits by logging into: <https://www.narprail.org/MyBenefits> ■

Important Membership Reminder

■ There are still openings for state representatives on the NARP Council of Representatives in several states, including one each in Alabama; Arizona; Hawaii; Idaho; Indiana; Missouri; North Carolina; North Dakota; Ohio; Virginia (2 seats) and Wyoming. If you are interested in becoming more involved with NARP and advancing our goal of 'A Connected America,' please visit our website, www.narprail.org under 'About' to 'Leadership' to 'Council of Representatives' to 'Open Seats' for more information on applying and for a complete, up-to-date list of the positions available. ■

Mathews Takes Part in DOT Meetings

Twice in the past few weeks, NARP President Jim Mathews has been invited to take part in meetings with high-level federal transportation officials to discuss rail passenger issues at the U.S. Dept. of Transportation.

In the two meetings, Mathews expressed NARP's commitment to increased funding for infrastructure in America. He hit on hot topics including connectivity for rural communities, the economic damage that would result from killing the National Network, and the ticking time-bomb that is neglect of the Northeast Corridor — an economic artery for the United States. And, he reinforced the principles of "A Connected America," which includes advocacy for an interconnected transportation system that will boost the economy nationally and locally and increase mobility for millions of people. ■

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terms for the Board of Directors the Council gets to vote on three seats. Elected for a three-year term to the board were George Chilson (California), Charlie Hamilton (Washington) and Phil Streby (Indiana). Phil will also assume the role of Board Division Liaison for the Midwest and South Central regions.

We are now going to do this with three newly appointed Council Representatives: Jonathan Nelson from Florida, Ron Kaminkow from Nevada and Kevin Mock from Pennsylvania.

Moving forward, it will be important to keep this energy flowing and keep building from the ground floor up. Thanks for everything you do.

Your Chairman,
Peter J. LeCody

... Save These Dates ...

'A Day Without Trains': June 23rd

✓ The fight to preserve the National Network has really only begun, but thanks to all of you we've already won a significant victory with support in the Fiscal 2017 spending plan (see Top Story).

We expect the Network to come under assault again in the Fiscal 2018 budget submission, which Congress will debate this summer. Make no mistake: the state-supported services and the Northeast Corridor would also be terribly crippled by the end of the National Network, and this is a moment for everyone who needs passenger-rail service to stand up and be counted.

We'll be organizing a national Day Without Trains on June 23rd, and we **NEED YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR TOWN**. Watch for emails and announcements on how to take part.

NARP's RailNation Chicago THE Rail Passenger Advocacy Event

- ✓ Thursday, November 2nd to Sunday, November 5th, 2017
- ✓ Four days packed with an exciting array of presentations, speakers, exhibits, tours, and events
- ✓ Highlighting the future of passenger rail in the United States and celebrating NARP's 50th Anniversary!
- ✓ Host Hotel: Millennium Knickerbocker - E. Walton Place at N. Michigan Ave.
- ✓ Event registration and discounted hotel reservations are now open! Visit the NARP website for complete information. ■

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billion in FY2017 discretionary appropriations for the Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), TIGER Grants, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

FRA – The bill provides \$1.85 billion, an increase of \$173 million above the FY2016 enacted level, including:

- ✓ \$1.495 billion for Amtrak (an increase of \$105 million over FY2016), including \$328 million for the Northeast Corridor and \$1.167 billion to support the National Network.
- ✓ \$98 million in rail grants to support the implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) safety technology, make rail infrastructure improvements, and restore or enhance passenger rail service.
- ✓ \$258 million to support rail safety and research programs, including inspectors and safety personnel to help ensure the safety of passengers and local communities.
- ✓ \$98 million for FAST Act Rail Grants:
 - Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Grants: \$25 million for capital projects to bring existing assets into a state of good repair;
 - Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grants: \$68 million for capital projects to improve rail corridors, with \$10 million reserved for projects that “contribute to the initiation or restoration of intercity passenger rail service”;
 - Restoration and Enhancement Grants: \$5 million for projects that restore and enhance passenger rail service.

TIGER Grants – \$500 million for TIGER grants, equal to the FY2016 enacted level. TIGER grants are a popular program supporting innovative projects, including multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional projects, which are difficult to fund through

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infrastructure,” Mathews stated. “NARP fully understands that the repair work at Penn Station will cause disruptions over the summer months, but in the end, upgrades to Penn Station will result in a new sense of safety and reliability that can be expanded upon throughout the national rail network.”

Amtrak says it will redirect funds that would have been spent on technological improvements to pay for new tracks at Penn Station. Moorman noted, it would take, “tens of millions of dollars,” to improve the station and the interlocking section where the two trains derailed. The derailments were related to rails widening as a result of ties becoming weak, and the wheels of the trains not being able to stay on the tracks.

Amtrak has laid out plans for the Penn Station Improvement Initiatives, which include:

- New York Penn Station Infrastructure Renewal Program
- New York Penn Station Passenger Concourse Coordination Review
- Development of a Joint Station Concourse Operations Center
- Safety & Security

At the time of publication, representatives from Amtrak, NJ

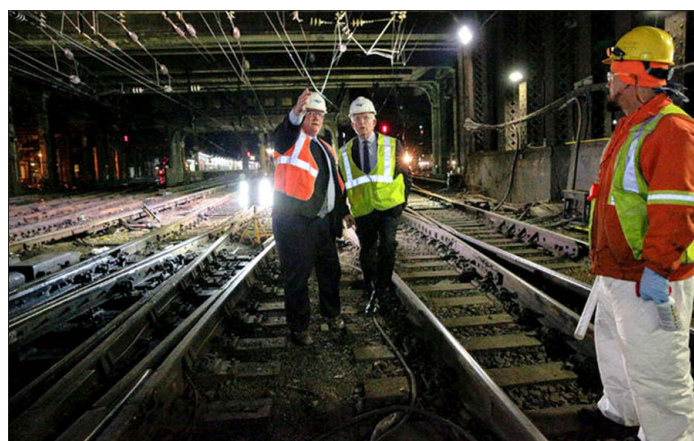


The federal government passed a short-term funding bill for the rest of FY2017. (Photo Credit: USCP)

traditional federal programs.

FTA – \$12.4 billion in total budgetary resources for the FTA, including:

- ✓ \$9.3 billion for transit formula grants from the Highway Trust Fund (an increase of \$753 million over FY2016).
- ✓ \$2.4 billion for Capital Investment Grants (“New Starts”), fully funding all current “Full Funding Grant Agreement” (FFGA) transit projects, as well supporting new projects anticipated to receive FFGA awards (an increase of \$236 million over FY2016).
- Notably, the bill directs the DOT to move ahead with specific FFGAs, including \$150 million for Maryland’s Purple Line rail project, and \$100 million for the Caltrain Peninsula Electrification project that the Trump Administration had indefinitely suspended. ■



Amtrak President Wick Moorman, right, tours repairs being done at Penn Station in New York. (Photo Credit: The New York Times.)

Transit, and LIRR were working together to formulate a plan for repairs that would work best at accommodating the needs of all passengers. ■

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We advocated to:

- ✓ Fully fund and implement the passenger rail programs created by the FAST Act.
- ✓ Pass a multimodal infrastructure bill that addresses the deficit in transportation investment.
- ✓ Make modern passenger rail service available within 25 miles of 80% of Americans in 25 years.

During a Congressional Reception hosted by NARP following “Day on the Hill” activities, several guest speakers—including multiple members of Congress—shared their views on passenger rail throughout the U.S. and its future. The mood of the reception was particularly electric in the context of President Trump’s proposed federal budget that threatened to slash funding for rail.

For example, U.S. Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL) stated, “If the President’s skinny budget goes forward, Florida would be one of those states that would lose all of its rail, and I just can’t imagine anything worse than that outcome.”

Other elected officials who presented at the reception included: U.S. Rep. Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH); U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA); U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY); Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ); and U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).

In addition, NARP recognized Senator Patrick Leahy (D) of Vermont, Representative Elise Stefanik (R) of New York, and Representative Ann McLane Kuster (D) of New Hampshire with the Golden Spike Award for their leadership in successfully enacting legislation permitting border pre-clearance to ease travel and commerce between the U.S. and Canada. The measure advanced border security while also improved the passenger experience on rail trips across the border.

The Promoting Travel, Commerce, and National Security Act, signed into law in December 2016, allowed for the upgrade of U.S. Customs and Border Protection preclearance facilities. These facilities will ease the movement of people and goods at rail, land, marine, and air ports. The bipartisan bill expands U.S. preclearance operations to train stations for the first time ever. It will make it easier for both American and Canadian passengers to travel internationally by train—an economic boost for U.S. communities that depend on tourism.

Moving forward, we, as passenger rail advocates, must continue our efforts to encourage our representatives to not overlook the importance of new policies and funding that promote the growth of rail in the U.S. This is more important than ever as we look towards 2018. ■

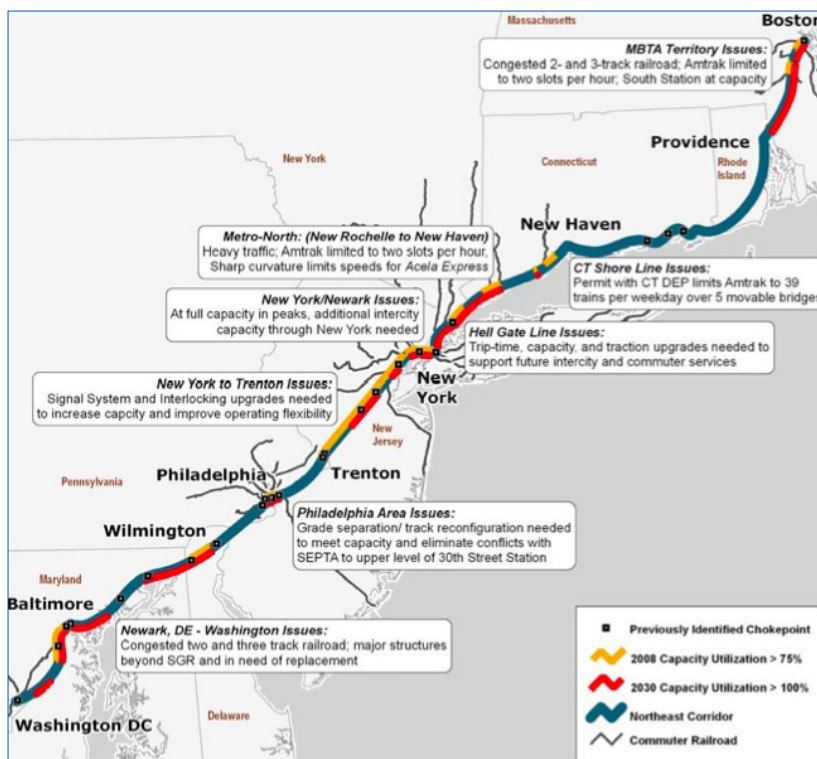
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This includes the repair of rail, ties and signals that are currently required to maintain safe levels of service in the NEC, and falls under the Baseline Capital Charge (BBC) Program.

The Commission’s report stated that, “This funding does not address the \$38 billion state-of-good-repair backlog along the NEC to support existing service.

Without additional investment to replace failing assets, BBC Program funding levels leave the NEC at risk of being unable to support existing service.”

“Future investment in the NEC, as well as the national rail network as a whole, was a major discussion point for our members during our ‘Day on the Hill’ in April,” said Mathews. “With the release of the Commission’s report, now is not the time to let up, but rather keep pushing federal officials to invest in the country’s economy and future by investing in rail.” *Additional information on “Day on the*



Hill” can be found on pages 1 and 2.

Route alignment questions have instigated heated political debate in several NEC states and, moving forward, NARP encourages members throughout the NEC to engage in the process, as well as voice their support for federal investments by contacting their representatives.

The Commission was created 2008 by the U.S. Congress to provide insights and recommendations for passenger rail service in the NEC.

The Commission is made up of transportation officials from each of the eight NEC states and D.C., as well as four officials from Amtrak

and five from the U.S. Transportation Department.

The Northeast Corridor Capital Investment Plan: Fiscal years 2018-2022 can be found online at: www.nec-commission.com. ■

WEB EXCLUSIVE! Get Ready, Summer By Rail 2017 Is Almost Here

Summer is right around the corner and that means “Summer by Rail” is returning for a second year. Thanks to the warm and enthusiastic support that Elena Studier and her bike Stevie received last year, we are expanding the program this year to send two interns across the country by rail for nearly 40 days.

Caitlin Boyle and Victoria Principato, both students at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., won the internship after a competitive application process. They will explore dozens of cities this summer. Together, they will share

their experiences on www.summerbyrail.com as they travel from city to city by rail and bike. Major metropolitan areas and smaller communities will be traversed for this year’s event, which will kick-off in July. Some cities that Caitlin and Victoria will visit include New York, St. Louis, and Buffalo—as well as cities in Canada, including Montreal and Toronto.

The next leg of Summer By Rail will begin on July 31st in New York, and additional details on the event will be made available at www.summerbyrail.com. ■

NARP Traveler’s Advisory

❖ Coast Starlight Trains 11 and 14 will experience temporary Service Disruption between Sacramento and Seattle, effective through mid-May 2017. Due to significant bridge damage, which occurred near Redding, CA, on April 25, 2017, service changes have been made to Coast Starlight that are expected to continue through mid-May. Trains 11 and 14 will operate according to the normal schedule between Los Angeles and Sacramento only, and the Pacific Parlour Car will not be available. All train and Thruway bus connections to and from the Coast Starlight between Los Angeles and Sacramento will continue.

❖ As of May 1, 2017, Cardinal and Hoosier State Trains will see schedule changes (all times are local). Trains 50 and 850 will depart 11 minutes earlier at all stations from Dyer to Crawfordsville. Trains 51 and 851 will arrive in Chicago five minutes earlier, at 10 am. ■