

President Signs Amtrak Act of 1973

Despite a recommendation from the Department of Transportation to veto the bill, President Richard Nixon on Saturday, November 3, signed the Amtrak Improvement Act of 1973. Final action by the President culminated a great legislative victory for Amtrak, rail labor, NARP, environmental groups and others who are committed to the cause of railroad passenger service.

On signing the bill, the President commented:

"Emerging trends and international events since (1970) have increasingly dramatized two additional dimensions of the national interest in enabling — and indeed encouraging — our people to choose a train when they make travel plans. Those dimensions are energy conservation and protection of our environment. Railroads can carry more passengers over greater distances per gallon of fuel than automobiles or airlines are able to do, while adding fewer pollutants to our air. With our oil resources becoming increasingly precious, not just this winter but for some years ahead, the energy efficiency of rail travel is an especially compelling argument for expansion of appropriate Federal assistance to AMTRAK, the rail passenger corporation.

"It is with these concerns in mind that I have today signed S. 2016, the AMTRAK Improvement Act of 1973, despite my reservations about several aspects of this bill."

The President objected to parts of the Act which would require the "basic system" to operate for one more year; give the ICC more power over standards of service; and transfer from DOT to Congress basic authority over Amtrak spending programs. It was this last provision which provoked the DOT veto recommendation.

Thanks NARP Members

Thanks to the many NARP members who responded so generously to the appeal by Chairman Anthony Haswell for a special contribution to meet extraordinary expenses.

In the same vein, member Kenneth Walton writes to suggest that NARP members should attempt to enlist fellow Amtrak passengers in the association.

"Most of the thousands of people who travel by Amtrak are NOT members of NARP, and may not have heard of the good work NARP is doing. This suggests that every member of NARP should take with them when they travel several copies of a compact sheet about NARP to give to persons they meet on the trains."

We like Mr. Walton's suggestion, and will try to provide such materials to all members soon. In the meantime, how about giving this copy of the NEWS to a possible new member? Below is a coupon which can be used by such persons. The need for more members is urgent!

Support NARP — Bring In A New Member

Yes, I want to aid the cause of better rail passenger service. I understand I will receive a membership card and a monthly newsletter to keep me informed of developments.

Enclosed is my remittance for the category checked. I understand that part of this amount is for a one-year subscription to the newsletter.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsoring \$50 |
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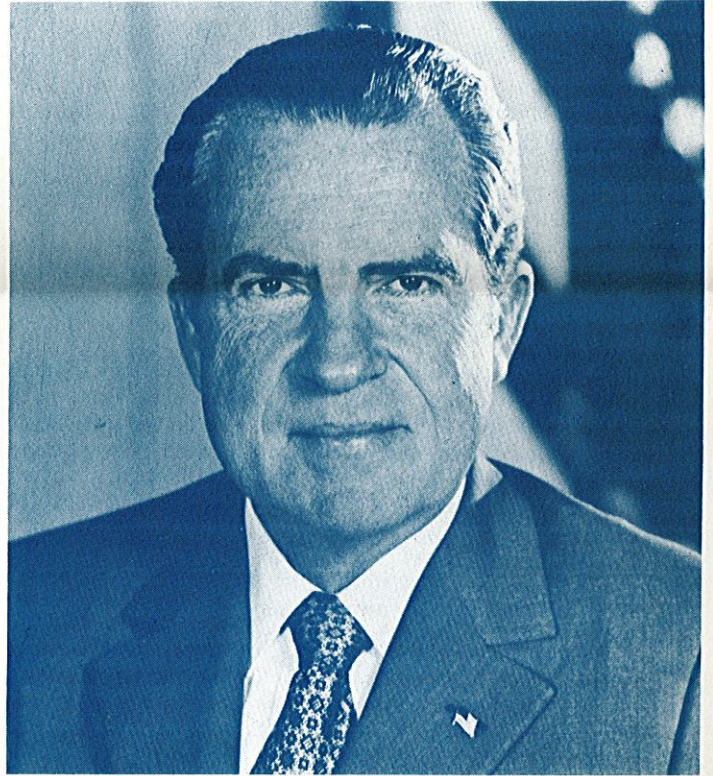
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(NARP members should not use this form to renew. It would be helpful if members wait until they receive the coded renewal reminder.)

The President identified a "major shortcoming" of Amtrak as "persistent management weaknesses". He promised that the Administration would move to "improve Amtrak's management efficiency" through authority granted by the Act "to review certain aspects of management". Presumably the President had in mind that provision of the Act which terminates the terms of the current presidentially-appointed directors.



PRESIDENT NIXON

The new Amtrak Law sharply limits the amount of additional payments railroads may obtain from Amtrak for running its passenger trains.

The act further encourages Amtrak to run its own trains with its own people, and allows Amtrak to run its trains at maximum safe speeds (despite wishes of the railroads to the contrary).

The 1973 Amtrak Act gives Amtrak passenger trains priority over freight trains, with certain exceptions.

It creates a new Amtrak board of directors, on a bi-partisan basis, with three consumer representatives, and forbids conflict

(Continued on Page Four)

Hearings on the petition of Amtrak to discontinue Trains Number 98 and 99, between Norfolk, Newport News and Richmond, Virginia, will be held at 9:30 a.m., Nov. 26 at Newport News and Nov. 28 at Richmond. They had previously been scheduled for October.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 7, No. 10

Oct.-Nov. 1973

DOES THIS KIND OF PERFORMANCE MERIT A \$40 MILLION BONUS?

NARP's office on Capitol Hill overlooks a railroad track which starts at Union Station, proceeds under the Capitol via tunnel, and emerges at New Jersey Ave., SE. The track then interlocks with the Penn Central main line near Virginia Ave., SE.

On a warm September afternoon, NARP Executive Secretary Linda Sturgill glanced out the window as Amtrak Train No. 81 emerged from the tunnel. She noticed that the passenger train appeared to be converging with a long freight train also headed South on the main track. As she watched, the Amtrak train ground to a halt and the freight train highballed on its profitable way.

"Guess what," she remarked to Tony Haswell and Bob Casey. "They're doing right out here what they say they don't do." After a personal observation of the situation, Chairman Haswell called F. S. King, Amtrak's vice president—operations, to report the occurrence.

Mr. King lodged a protest to Penn Central, which immediately denied the occurrence. On October 2, however, J. M. Gilmore, Penn Central's general manager for passenger operations, wrote to Mr. King stating that, after an investigation, he had determined that the delay did indeed occur. "We have taken corrective action with all concerned to prevent a recurrence of this nature," he added.

At almost the same time, perhaps on the same warm September afternoon, the august members of the Interstate Commerce Commission were arriving at the famous decision — which the ICC says cannot be appealed — that Amtrak should reward Penn Central by paying the railroad an additional \$40 million.

Fortunately, Amtrak doesn't accept the non-appealability of the decision, and says it will go to court to upset the ruling.

Meanwhile, Congress has joined the battle, by inserting in the Amtrak bill a provision "overruling" the ICC decision.

Thus, it appears, Penn Central, which does not provide good service to Amtrak, cannot reasonably count on being "rewarded" with a \$40 million bonus, despite its good friend, the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Because of "substantial increases in ridership," Amtrak has announced that two of its western trains — the Coast Starlight and the San Francisco Zephyr — will continue to run on daily schedules through the winter season. Both had previously been on three-day-a-week schedules except in the summer.

The Coast Starlight connects Oakland and Seattle. The Zephyr links Chicago and San Francisco.

Rich Southern Pacific Has Worst Performance

Southern Pacific, one of the wealthiest and most financially-successful transportation companies anywhere, has just about the worst record of any railroad in delivery of passengers on time.

According to the Amtrak on-time study for July, the Southern Pacific scored the worst record, operating its trains for Amtrak on time only 21.6 per cent of the time. The ratio sank even lower during August, amounting to 11.9 per cent on-time performance. Amtrak officials asserted it was "an all-time low" for the service.

The Southern Pacific operates Amtrak services between Los Angeles and New Orleans, Los Angeles and Portland, and Ogden, Utah and San Francisco. Its trains were late an average of 85 minutes per run, according to the survey.

POST OFFICE STATEMENT

Statement of the ownership, management and circulation of "News from National Association of Railroad Passengers," published monthly except November at Washington, D.C., required by the Act of Congress of August 12, 1970; Section 3685, Title 39, U.S.C.

Chairman of the board, Anthony Haswell. Editor, R.J. Casey. Owner: National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP). Stockholders: NARP, a membership organization, is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation and has no stockholders or other security holders.

I hereby request permission to mail the publication named above at the reduced postage rates presently authorized by 39 U.S.C. 3626. (Signed) R.J. Casey, Executive Director.

11. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months.	Actual Number of Single Issue Published Nearest to filing date.
A. Total No. Copies printed (net press run)	6,500	7,000
B. Paid Circulation		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and countersales	None	None
2. Mail subscriptions	5,500	5,657
C. Total Paid Circulation	5,500	5,657
D. Free distribution by mail carrier or other means		
1. Samples, complimentary and other free copies	900*	1,000*
2. Copies distributed to news agents, but not sold	None	None
E. Total Distribution (sum of C and D)	6,400	6,598
F. Office use, left-over, unaccounted spoiled after printing	100	402
G. Total (sum of E & F—should equal net press run shown)	6,500	7,000

* by first class mail.

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
Robert J. Casey, Executive Director

Passenger Train Journal Attains National Retail Distribution

PASSENGER TRAIN JOURNAL has completed arrangements for retail distribution of the publication through hobby shops throughout the country. The publishers expect this move will result in a substantial increase in circulation. To facilitate recognition on newsstands, the cover has been redesigned with the name of the publication spelled out in boldface letters.

57 Metroliner Cars Ordered

Amtrak has announced it will virtually double its fleet of Metroliner cars and extend high-speed Metroliner service from New York to Boston.

It signed contracts for new equipment valued at \$63.5 million including:

—fifty-seven new Metroliner-type coaches, capable of operation in trains pulled by either electric or diesel locomotives, and for services in the Washington-New York-Boston "northeast corridor."

—eleven new 6,000-horsepower electric locomotives (to be added to 15 already ordered earlier this year) to replace the famed but ancient Penn Central CG-1 electrics that have operated in the "corridor" since the 1930s.

—seventy new diesel passenger locomotives for other Amtrak routes around the nation.

With the award of yesterday's contracts Amtrak has now committed more than \$110 million this year to new locomotives and passenger cars.

'Texas Chief' Case Gets Ruling by Arbitration Panel

The Sixth International Conference on Urban Transportation will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 20-21, 1974, according to Willard F. Rockwell Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of Rockwell International Corporation. Mr. Rockwell will be general chairman of the conference. Past conferences have attracted transportation officials and experts from all over the world.

Amtrak Auto Trains In Planning Stage

Several Amtrak auto-train routes are in the planning stages, with the first scheduled to be from Chicago to Florida. This service may start before the end of the year, according to Amtrak.

"We're looking at equipment, the facilities needed for loading automobiles as well as unloading them, and also the rate structure for the service," an Amtrak official said.

Down the road, according to Amtrak, plans call for trying the service out in other parts of the country, notably up and down the West Coast and between the West Coast and Denver; Denver and Chicago; and New York and Florida. But that service may still be a year or more away, and its start will depend on the success of the Chicago-Florida experiment.

The official noted that a number of Florida towns and their railroad stations are currently being looked at, although none has yet been specifically selected for use. Miami, it appears, has been ruled out. Instead, it is expected the terminal location will be in the north-central part of the state.

San Francisco Zephyr Now Stops At Lake Tahoe, Squaw Valley

Lake Tahoe and the surrounding winter and summer recreation areas now has Amtrak service for the first time. The Chicago-San Francisco train, the San Francisco Zephyr, now stops at Truckee, California.

The westbound Zephyr arrives in Truckee each day at 8:22 a.m. and arrives in Oakland at 3:05 p.m. Eastbound, the Zephyr leaves Oakland at 9:20 a.m. and stops in Truckee at 2:35 p.m.

Truckee is the nearest rail point to Lake Tahoe, Squaw Valley, site of the 1960 Winter Olympics.

The public statements of the Penn Central Trustees are larded with references to "bleeding", "struggling" and so on. One gains the impression that the valiant management is akin to a Bull in the middle of the arena, down on its knees, bleeding from flank to shoulder, struggling to rise and resume the battle, but pierced by the thrusts of the Picador, who is the Government; stabbed in a multitude of places by the Banderillas of Local, State and Federal taxes; and with eyes upraised to the balanced Toreador, Labor, who is about to deliver the final momento de la verdad. It makes a striking picture — but I suspect, Gentlemen, that we are listening to the wrong end of the Bull.

—L.E. Dennis, Executive Director
Brotherhood of Railway Clerks before the House
Commerce Committee on May 21, 1973

An arbitration panel has cleared the track for Amtrak passenger-train service through Dallas.

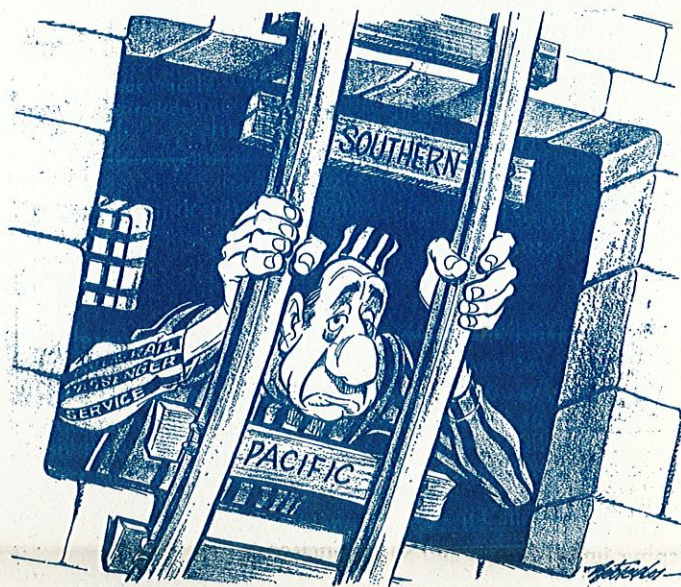
The panel ruled, in a dispute between Amtrak and the Southern Pacific Railroad, that Amtrak should be allowed to re-route its Chicago-Houston train through Dallas, between Fort Worth and Houston, over Southern Pacific track. Currently the train runs through Temple, Texas, on the Fort Worth-Houston leg, using Santa Fe track.

The SP had blocked the Amtrak attempt to use the road's track for the proposed new Dallas service, arguing that the track isn't safe enough for passenger trains and that the operation would unduly interfere with the railroad's heavy freight traffic.

The arbitration panel ruled that both Amtrak and the SP should bear equally the costs of upgrading track, installing a centralized traffic-control system and making other improvements that would facilitate the Dallas passenger-train service.

The panel said the two parties should work out ways to sufficiently improve the route segment so that the train can make the Dallas-Houston trip in six hours or less. It said it will employ its own expert to advise the panel as to when the new operation can begin, and gave Amtrak and the SP until Nov. 12 to report on their progress toward upgrading the track.

Amtrak had planned to begin the Dallas service last June, after the city's voters approved a \$6 million bond issue, mainly for the purchase of the currently unused Dallas train station.



Courtesy DALLAS TIMES HERALD

The ruling states:

- "1. The parties shall meet, and the Panel expects them to agree on the amount of expenditures necessary to achieve at least a 6-hour schedule for the Dallas-Houston line. The Panel also expects the parties to agree on the time required to implement the necessary improvements. The parties shall report to the Panel on the results of their meetings no later than Nov. 12, 1973.
- "2. After approval by the Panel, the program of improvements shall begin promptly. The cost of the program shall be borne equally by the two parties.
- "3. The Panel will employ an impartial expert to advise the Panel as to when, after commencement of the program of improvements, service which is safe and which avoids unreasonable interference with the adequacy, safety and efficiency of other Southern Pacific operations can begin."

Does Canadian Pacific Goal Foretell U.S. RR Future Trend? (Editorial)

Like many U. S. railroads, Canadian Pacific is a conglomerate business, engaged in air travel, hotels, realty, mining, navigation, urban development, etc.

In 1972, Canadian Pacific's railroad operations gave the corporation a net income of \$57 million. Yet, according to a translation of an article in a French-language Quebec newspaper, CP is "dreaming of getting rid of its railroad operations."

Some of the translation from *Dimanche Matin* follows:

"...the Minister of Transportation Mr. Jean Marchand has already said that he cannot allow any freight rate increase in Western Canada. Under such circumstances, C. P. Rail supported by low profit balance sheets would show that it is not possible to continue the operations and would give the entire system to the federal government or the C. N. Effective that date the taxpayers like you and me will have to fill the deficits which are higher on the Canadian National. Canadian Pacific would then stay with truly interesting filials (subsidiaries) which are Aviation, Urban Development, Navigation, Realities, Mines etc."

In other words, CP can make money on its railroad, but not enough. Its return-on-investment (ROI) for the railroad subsidiary is much lower than ROI for other subsidiaries, so "to hell with it."

American railroads which have gone conglomerate are, in many instances, neglecting maintenance of roadbeds, etc., with the idea that they can get a much greater ROI in some other field of business.

It doesn't take a crystal ball to see that, eventually, they may wish to completely abandon their railroad operations with the idea of throwing the burden on the taxpayers.

Perhaps Congress should take a long, hard look at the entire railroad conglomerate pattern that is emerging, before it is too late.

As a member who has complained loudly and long about the poor phone service at 30th St. Station of the Penn Central, I would like to report that everything has been corrected, and that phone information services there has been consistently excellent for some time now.

—Leon Lester, Philadelphia

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(Continued From Page One)

of interest situations. Presumably, this legislation would oust John J. Gilhooley, president of the nation's third largest bus company, from the board.

Total funding of \$154.3 million was granted, and the bill stated that any increase in payments to the railroads must be tied to an increase in quality of service provided to Amtrak by the railroads.

The bill requires the Interstate Commerce Commission to determine if proposed auto-train services in competition to Amtrak would be in the public interest, a slight shift in earlier language that would force an applicant seeking such a route to prove that it wouldn't hurt Amtrak.

For Auto-Train Corp., which plans a Louisville-Florida route, this means the ICC must determine that Auto-Train won't harm Amtrak — which wants to start an auto-ferrying operation of its own between Chicago and Florida.

The bill also requires Amtrak to continue its "basic system" of intercity passenger service through next June 30 and increases the Amtrak authority for government-guaranteed loans to \$500 million, compared to \$200 million previously.

The act also overrules an I.C.C. decision which ordered Amtrak to pay Penn Central a bonus of \$40 million. Apparently this was the I.C.C.'s method of giving financial help to Penn Central.

As in all successful legislative efforts, the Amtrak Improvement Act of 1973 was definitely a team effort. Among the "heavies" on the team was rail labor, led by Jim Synder of the United Transportation Union. We appreciate labor's support and look forward to working with the rail labor organizations on matters of mutual interest in the future.

—Anthony Haswell
Chairman of NARP

"The Union Pacific, those wonderful people who brought you the Interstate Commerce Commission, now bring you the Federal National Railway Association."

—John W. Barnum, Undersecretary of Transportation

NEWS from NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

417 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003

Published monthly except during November by the National Association of Railroad Passengers. Phone 202-546-1550.

Vol. 7, No. 10

Oct.-Nov. 1973

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Robert J. Casey, Executive Director
Linda Sturgill, Executive Secretary

Subscription is through payment of a membership fee to NARP, part of which applies to a one-year subscription to this publication.

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