



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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SUPPORT FROM RSPO

"The public hearings generated broad public support and a demonstrated need for the continuation of rail passenger service. Valid social needs of individuals and communities were raised in support of virtually every route threatened with a loss of service."

Thus wrote the ICC's Rail Services Planning Office in its review of the DOT's preliminary recommendations on Amtrak's route structure, and of RSPO's public hearings on those recommenda-

To receive a copy of the RSPO's "Evaluation Report . . . on Amtrak's Route Structure", write to the ICC Rail Services Planning Office, 1900 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

tions. "For many travelers, bus, air, or private auto were neither preferred nor readily available alternative means of travel. It was demonstrated that rail passenger service met the real needs of the economically disadvantaged, the elderly and handicapped, students, and tourists, as well as those citizens in regions where severe winter weather makes travel by other modes difficult or, at times, impossible. Energy considerations in the near future were also repeatedly raised as a need for the continuation, and even the expansion, of rail passenger service. While there was broad public support for continuation of rail passenger services, there was, at the same time, serious concern raised about the quality of Amtrak's present service."

RSPO identified as an "analytical shortcoming" the fact that DOT judged some routes "on their past performance under poor operating conditions. . . . If DOT were charged with reviewing only the present performance of the Amtrak routes, overlooking the potential performance of a route would have been understandable. However, DOT was directed to base its route recommendations on current and future market and population requirements. DOT should base its route recommendations on a route's potential, rather than assessing it on its performance under adverse conditions." (p. 32)

RSPO suggests that the "Secretary's recommendations . . . are based on criteria . . . applicable under a 'for profit' mandate. . . . The need for a change in direction has been recognized by Congress in the Amtrak Improvement Act of 1978, which eliminated the 'for profit' objective and sets forth social and environmental criteria for evaluating Amtrak's route structure.

RSPO openly stated the concern shared by many NARP members—that DOT's preliminary proposal "is a temporary pruning, which is likely to be repeated every few years as inflation drives Amtrak's costs higher." (p. 22)

RSPO rejected the cries of the bus industry, noting: "Inducing a small fraction of automobile users to bus and rail would do far more than anything either industry could gain from diverting passengers from each other. . . . The Nation cannot afford to lose the services provided by either the private bus industry or by

THE "NIAGARA RAINBOW" LIVES!

On Sept. 27, three days before the New York-Detroit train was to have ceased operation west of Buffalo, the Michigan Highway Commission reversed an earlier decision and voted to continue the service at least through the end of 1978. The commissioners were primarily influenced by passage of a state transportation package that expands funding of public transit from 1/2¢ of the 9¢ state gas tax to the income from a 30% increase in license fees and a 2¢ gas tax increase. (90% of the funds designated for public transit must be used on highway-related transit projects, but the remaining 10% is adequate for existing rail services.)

The commissioners want to increase ridership, and will hold public hearings on what should be done with the "Rainbow" over the long term. Alternatives under consideration are shifting to an overnight schedule and shifting to a route through Toledo.

Amtrak. We believe that the DOT should suggest separate measures which could be taken to rejuvenate the bus industry, and to provide for the continuation of the essential services provided by bus carriers."

Regarding specific routes, RSPO made only one clear recommendation—that both Chicago-Seattle routes be retained. Beyond that, RSPO simply reported what others said, and the closest thing to another recommendation was the statement that "Clearly, the public comment received at our (Racine) hearing demonstrates a broad public support for using the C&NW (Chicago-Milwaukee) route." Regarding DOT's suggestion that service to Thalmann, GA (near Brunswick) be eliminated, RSPO wrote: "The southern coastal route of Georgia is a growing resort area with a potential for increased patronage. A decision to use only the inland route would eliminate service to the coastal area without increasing service at other points."

The strongest material, including our opening paragraph above, is buried in the body of the report, whereas the "principal

The conference report on Amtrak's FY '79 authorization (August News), the "Amtrak Improvement Act of 1978", was passed unchanged on a recorded House vote of 267-127 Sept. 19 and by a voice vote in the Senate Sept. 23. President Carter signed it into law, without ceremony, on Oct. 5.

recommendations" at the front are rather timid. They deal with such things as the need for DOT to consider social criteria and the need for a permanent funding process for Amtrak—generalizations with which NARP and Brock Adams could both agree.

For those who read the whole document, however, the RSPO report demonstrates the validity of NARP's position, and it is easy to understand reports that the people at DOT are unhappy with it.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FOR RAIL PASSENGERS

New Amfleet equipment is now on the New York-St. Louis-Kansas City "National Ltd." (except it will begin Oct. 29 on the Washington section) and the New York-Detroit "Niagara Rainbow", and these trains will soon become useful to many more people. Amfleeting the "Rainbow" became possible after development of an Amfleet power car which would be allowed in the Grand Central tunnel.

From Oct. 29, the "National" will serve Philadelphia's 30th St. Station, and the coach-only Washington/Baltimore section will run daily instead of tri-weekly. Wilmington, DE, will also gain through service to the "National" route, since the new daily car will run in regular corridor trains between Washington and Philadelphia. The "National" sleeping car is not running west of Indianapolis, pending availability of another car converted for electric operation, expected by November.

Also from Oct. 29, the Detroit train will operate via Niagara Falls, with new stops there and at Exchange St. in downtown Buffalo.

BOYD MEETS THE INLAND ROUTE

NARP Director James M.S. Ullman led a delegation of about 20 New Englanders by train to Washington for an August 21 meeting with Amtrak President Alan Boyd to acquaint him with the strong support that exists for establishing through service between Boston and New York via Worcester, Springfield, and Hartford.

Particularly noteworthy was the fact that several elected officials were willing to devote a full day to the ride and the meeting. They included Lewis Rome, minority leader in the Connecticut Senate and Republican candidate for Lieutenant Governor; Rep. Benjamin Dezinno, of the Appropriations Committee in the Connecticut House of Representatives; Robert Ludgin, of the Hartford city council; and Edward Savino, 1st selectman from Windsor Locks, CT.

Gerald Pieri, representing the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, indicated the state would fund \$5 million of track improvements on Conrail's Boston-Springfield segment if Amtrak would promise four daily round-trips on the Inland Route.

The other NY-Buffalo day train, the "Empire State Express", will be extended to make the same new stops. Exchange St. will be an unmanned stop for a few months, until a third new station is opened in the eastern Buffalo suburb of Cheektowaga, at which time service to the old terminal will cease. Thenceforth, the NY-Cleveland-Chicago "Lake Shore" will stop at Cheektowaga and the two day trains at all three new stations.

In preparation for the new service, the state of New York will have invested \$6 million in track work on the Buffalo-Niagara Falls line, as well as another \$1 million for station rehabilitation in Buffalo and Niagara Falls. (When Niagara Falls service begins, the "Rainbow's" present stop at Fort Erie, Ont., will be discontinued.)

Another new station opened July 12 close to downtown Rochester, NY, on the site of the demolished New York Central station. Ceremonies celebrating the renovation of the Jackson, MI, station were planned for the evening of Oct. 11. The completed projects were jointly funded by Amtrak, the states, and the

The NARP Executive Committee approved the appointment of Ronald VanderKooi, 1509 Alexander S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506, as an At-Large member of the NARP Board of Directors. A special election for a director from Region V to represent Alabama, Mississippi, and Eastern Louisiana on a temporary basis until the next regular election in early 1979 has been won by Steven T. Evans, 2124 Sound View Drive, Gautier, MS 39553.

Any NARP member who wishes to be listed in the next issue as a candidate for election to the Board should indicate this to our Washington office as soon as possible.

cities. Amtrak also opened new stations in Miami on June 20 and Canton (OH) June 30.

Starting Oct. 29 or soon thereafter, Amtrak's passenger facilities in St. Louis will be moved out of unheated Union Station and its leaky trainshed into a temporary trailer facility. This should give passengers a more pleasant, if unpretentious, environment until the new station is completed at the same location.

Dallas Union Station is now the most luxurious Amtrak terminal in the U.S., says NARP Director M.D. Monaghan. The station itself was upgraded as a result of an \$8.3 million city bond issue; also by \$2 million of private capital invested in the Paradise Restaurant which opened in the station Oct. 5. The station has become a part of the extensive ReUnion complex to which it is connected by a tunnel under the tracks. The complex includes a 1,000-room Hyatt Regency hotel and a 562' observation tower/restaurant; a sports arena will open in about one year. This \$85 million investment will expand over 15 years to \$210 million as offices and apartments are added. Now all Dallas needs is FRA approval of a grant to build a platform canopy, and some decent train service.

Dearborn, MI, a key suburb west of Detroit, was added to the Amtrak system July 30. The three daily Chicago-Detroit trains stop there, plus the Detroit-Jackson "Michigan Executive".

On Sept. 3, Sacramento gained direct bus connections at Davis with the "Coast Starlight" both for points north (Eugene, Portland, Seattle) and south (Oakland, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles). Since Oct. 30, 1977, there has been a Sacramento-Stockton bus link for the "San Joaquin" serving Fresno and Bakersfield. The "Starlight" bus uses the Amtrak station in Sacramento; the "San Joaquin" bus uses the Greyhound terminal there.

It is easier to reach Washington (DC) Union Station now. From the week of Sept. 25, the subway, which directly serves Union Station, operates 6 AM-Midnight (extended from 8 PM) Monday-Friday, and Saturday service (8 AM-Midnight) was established. Another 7 miles of the system is set to go into service Nov. 20 to New Carrollton, MD.

INFLATION OF WHAT?

It has become fashionable for public officials to advocate increasing public transportation fares at the rate of inflation. Such a policy in reality is just another way for government to tell the individual: "Stay in your automobile!" It's also a message from government to transit riders: "Get an automobile! Don't use public transportation!"

This is because the cost of driving tends to rise less than the general rate of inflation. In the Washington, DC, area, for example, "gasoline and parking prices—two key factors in an individual's decision whether to drive or ride—have stayed fairly constant. Much parking for federal employees continues to be heavily subsidized." (Post, Sept. 22)

Nationally, the price of gasoline posted the smallest increase among the components of the transportation price index. According to the U.S. Travel Data Center, during the 12 months ending in July, the price of gasoline rose only 3% while intercity train fares rose 7%. (Travel Printout, Sept.)

What we need is a commitment from the Administration to keep the rate of transit fare increases below the rate of increase in the cost of driving. The automobile already has the cost advantage—in terms of the avoidable cost of most individual trips by someone who already owns an automobile; let alone the perceived cost of zero for short trips when one's gas tank is full. The automobile also has the advantage of convenience. Thus it is imperative that we not continue to improve the relative cost advantage of the automobile, and that we remind public officials at all levels of government that transit riders pay taxes too.

Government should stop penalizing those who use public transportation, which is really the cheaper mode when all costs to society, short- and long-term, are considered.

GOVERNMENT TRAVEL: MORE AIR SUBSIDIES

"Unnecessarily expensive travel by government officials may cost taxpayers \$50 million annually, Rep. Marty Russo (D-IL) declared yesterday. The waste is caused primarily by the failure of employees to take advantage of discount air fares and to take the train for short distance trips, according to a report he cited at a hearing.

"Department of Energy officials fly 90% of the time between Washington and Philadelphia, and between Washington and New York. The DOE office is one and a half blocks from Union Station.

"In one year, Housing and Urban Development employees booked 117 flights to Philadelphia while the Internal Revenue Service had 30 flights. In June 1978 alone, 17 DOE employees flew to Philadelphia. There are even cases of employees taking taxis to Baltimore-Washington International Airport to fly there. . . .

"Rep. Albert Gore (D-TN) pointed out that the average travel time between Washington and Philadelphia, including taxis to the terminal, is two hours and 12 minutes by train and two hours and 15 minutes by plane. But the air fare is more than double. By adding the loss of revenue to Amtrak . . . the total cost to the taxpayer of a plane ride to Philadelphia is \$62.34 compared with \$20.10 for rail. Each trip creates an unnecessary expense of \$42.24, Gore said.

"Even deducting the work time lost by taking the train to New York, he calculated the real cost of a plane trip is \$80.14 or \$37.25 unnecessary cost per trip. The three agencies mentioned above spent \$48,000 in excess travel costs to these cities in one year.

"Gore suggested that if federal employees were adamant about using planes when trains were cheaper, the employees should reimburse the government for the excess cost.

"Airlines now receive 96.8% of the outlays for federal travel. Kathy Hartz, district sales manager for Amtrak, said that Amtrak recently was asked to remove its stock of tickets from the Energy Department. Amtrak tickets are now sold in only 29 out of 200 government agencies. . . .

"There also was testimony by Amtrak supporter Gore that airlines are actually receiving federal subsidies in addition to the lion's share of travel expenses. The airlines receive free office space in government agencies. Moreover, they offer federal employees no discounts, as do hotels and rental car companies."

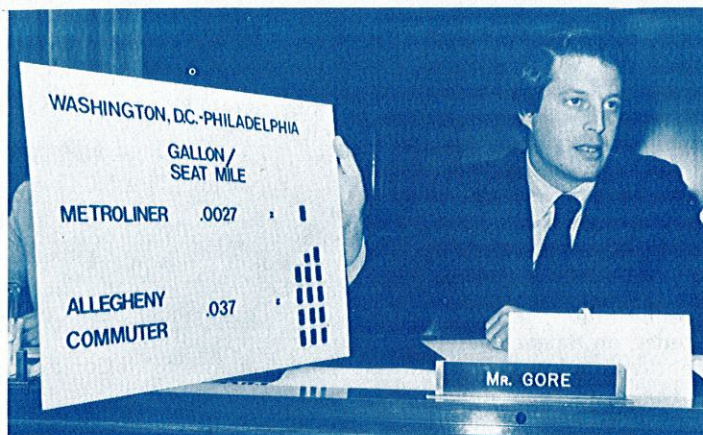
—The Washington Post, Aug. 10, 1978, reporting on an Aug. 9 House Small Business Committee hearing on Federal travel procurement policies

The fundamental problem reflected in the *Post* item on government travel is that the employee decides how to go, but the government pays all of the fare, even if the employee fails to take advantage of the cheapest reasonable service available. According to a Sept. 27 report in *The Washington Star*, "Federal employees traveling to other cities must begin to use Amtrak as the carrier of first choice, in addition to utilizing buses and airline discount fares, say the White House and a congressional subcommittee. . . . Meanwhile, the House Small Business subcommittee on special problems said federal workers should use Amtrak

CORRECTIONS

1977 freight revenue ton-miles in the U.S. were 549 and 831 billion for trucks and trains, respectively, not thousand as we reported last month.

Amtrak's special round-trip fares do not apply in club cars, contrary to the implication of last month's front page item. They do apply to "Custom Class" and to seats in sleeping cars.



Rep. Al Gore, Jr., (D-TN) explains the facts of life at a Sept. 26 hearing of the House Small Business Subcommittee on Special Problems.

instead of airlines when traveling in the Northeast Corridor. . . . Labor Dept. Comptroller William Reise said his agency's employees use rail service almost routinely as a first option. Jack Ryan, accounting chief at the Environmental Protection Agency said . . . EPA employees usually use rail service for short trips."

On the other hand, there was no evidence that practices at the offending agencies had changed. Rep. Gore told Department of Energy Finance Director Robert L. Zanetell: "I asked if the policy could be changed and I don't see any indication from you that it will be changed." And the Pentagon's transportation director, Paul Hyman, could only report that Pentagon personnel "spend 90% of their \$594 million in travel funds each year on airline tickets" but "could provide no details of travel patterns to determine whether rail service was a viable alternative", according to the *Star*.

To encourage positive action, Amtrak President Boyd early in September wrote to the cabinet officers and to the heads of 21 other Federal agencies, including President Carter's Special Assistant for Administration, calling attention to the fact that Amtrak service is frequently a reasonable, economical method of travel for government workers.

Closely related is the main concern of the subcommittee at whose hearings the Amtrak issue surfaced: whether government travel should be handled through travel agencies. Currently, procurement procedures are themselves another form of airline subsidy. Government departments have travel offices, staffed by

"THE AUTOMOBILE: It's Driving Us To Think" is the title of a booklet and questionnaire available from: Transportation Program, Office of Technology Assessment, U.S. Congress, Washington, DC 20510. Among the questions to which OTA seeks your replies: "Should the automobile be the major means of transportation for your area in 2000? If not, what alternatives would you suggest?" and "Describe the transportation system of 2000 as you would like it to be."

The booklet has basic information on the automobile and its impact on the environment, energy supplies, safety, and economics. It notes, for example, that, "because occupant protection is a function of crash distance and relative vehicle weights, safety may decrease as more Americans purchase smaller and lighter cars."

people on the public payroll. The airlines are not only spared the cost of staffing the travel offices, but they pay no commissions on tickets sold through those offices. By contrast, Amtrak has its own personnel in separate rail ticket offices in several government agencies. An indirect result of this setup is procedures which sometimes make it easier to obtain air tickets than rail tickets.

Needless to say, the airlines are bitterly opposed to the change under consideration: giving the government travel business to travel agents who would collect commissions.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES AT AMTRAK

President Alan S. Boyd's slate of corporate officers was approved by the Amtrak Board on Sept. 27. The two new faces are M.L. Clark Tyler, Vice President—Government Affairs, replacing Bruce Pike; and William N. Daly, Vice President—Corporate Planning, a position vacant since Calvin Andringa left last year.

In addition, Dr. Harry Yousoof has been appointed Assistant Vice President—Operations Support, replacing James Cowell, Vice President—Operations Support.

Tyler was special assistant to then-Secretary of Transportation Boyd in 1967. He also served under President Johnson as Deputy Chairman of the Appalachian Regional Commission. In the Carter Administration, he was deputy director of the White House Conference on Balanced National Growth and Economic Development (where his work included serving as liaison with Congress and relevant Federal agencies) and, most recently, assistant to Robert S. Strauss in the administration's anti-inflation program with responsibilities for planning and producing the White House Forums on Inflation.

Daly has been Assistant Vice President—Rail Asset Valuation with the U.S. Railway Association since 1976 and earlier held positions with Mobil Oil Corporation (1965-73) and McKinsey and Company, management consultants (1974-76).

Yousoof, of Sharon, Mass., has been manager, electronics/system manufacturing, electromechanical products, with the Precision Products Division of Northrop Corporation, and worked in the 60's with the Surface Transportation Division of United Technologies as chief project engineer of engineering and manufacturing programs, high speed jet-propelled passenger trains and boats.

Since we last reported on Amtrak Board membership (Feb. News), the Senate confirmed the President's appointments of Charles Luna and Frank Neel; Thomas J. Lamphier, president of the Transportation Division of the Burlington Northern Railroad, has replaced Norman M. Lorentzen, the BN's president and chief executive officer, as one of the three "railroad" members; the President has nominated Athalie Range to fill the seat presently occupied by Mary Head; Anthony Haswell's nomination was withdrawn; and the Board re-elected Donald P. Jacobs as chairman, and elected Luna to replace Head as vice-chairman.

As we noted earlier (Oct., 1977, News), Ms. Range, 59, owns the Range Funeral Home in Miami, and is an activist in black civic matters, former member of the Miami City Commission, and former head of the Florida Department of Community Affairs. She is also president of the Martin Luther King Boulevard Development Corp. in Miami.

With regard to Haswell, *The Washington Star* reported: "In February, Haswell wrote Sen. Harrison H. Schmitt (R-NM) complaining about undue influence in Amtrak affairs by Charles Luna, a former chairman of the United Transportation Union and an Amtrak director since the corporation started. The letter contained allegations which were investigated by the FBI. The bureau

NARP Director John R. Martin recently spent about 90 minutes with Amtrak President Alan S. Boyd. Martin was impressed with Boyd's assessment of Amtrak's situation today and is optimistic that Boyd may provide the kind of leadership needed to deal with many of Amtrak's problems.

Boyd's first priority seems to be getting Amtrak's trains on time and this has led to discussions with member railroads that should produce improved results. Boyd indicated other issues he considers important are the frequency of service, dependability of existing equipment and capital funding for new equipment, particularly for the Florida trains.

The new Amtrak president was appreciative of NARP's support during the recent ICC hearings and our efforts in generating support from others. He appears to believe further progress on the Amtrak route structure questions and Amtrak's future in general will await a determination of the mood of the Congress that will be elected in November.

In a letter to NARP President Orren Beaty, Boyd wrote: "I want to . . . commend the Directors, all staff and members of the National Association of Rail Passengers for the high level of testimony by its members at the recent ICC hearings across the country. Our reports are that the testimony of the NARP members was consistently factual, rational and persuasive. In fact, one representative of our friends from the highway mode was overheard saying, 'What we wouldn't give for a 'National Association of Bus Passengers.'"

could find no wrongdoing on Luna's part. . . .

"In (Haswell's letter of withdrawal) he points out he is asking his name be withdrawn as a nominee in accordance with President Carter's request. The request turns out to have been a promise by Haswell to have his name withdrawn if the FBI investigation of Luna turned up nothing. 'Under the circumstances,' says Haswell's letter, 'should Mr. Luna's nomination be confirmed, it does not appear possible that he and I could work together harmoniously and constructively on the Amtrak board.'"

The White House apparently will not come up with new nominees until next year. Assuming the Senate confirms Range, and the White House renominates Neel and James Mills, both of whose terms expired July 19, two new names can be expected: replacements for Robert G. Dunlop, whose term also expired July 19, and for Donald P. Jacobs, whose seat was to have been taken by Haswell.

James R. Mills, Amtrak Board member and president pro tem in the California State Senate, will give an informal talk at a meeting of NARP Region XII Sat., Nov. 18, 11:30 AM-1 PM, at the Little America Westgate Hotel in San Diego. Luncheon will follow.

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