

News from the  
**National Association of  
Railroad Passengers**

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# Rail Link Clears Two Big Hurdles

## House Vote Looms On Amtrak Funding

The week of July 19 may see the House vote on an amendment by Rep. W. J. (Billy) Tauzin (D-LA) to cut the **FY '94 Amtrak operating grant by \$20 million.** The amendment would be offered during consideration of H.R. 2490, the House's FY '94 Dept. of Transp. appropriations bill.

If the amendment passes, Amtrak's operating grant would be \$331 mill., \$20 mill. less than for FY '93 including the supplemental (see lead story). At that level, Amtrak says it would have to reduce service.

The Tauzin amendment would transfer the \$20 mill. to the Coast Guard. **To urge a vote against the amendment, call your U.S. representative—Capitol switchboard 202/224-3121 reaches all members.**

H.R. 2490 was to have reached the House floor in late June, but consideration was postponed after a controversy arose between Bob Carr (D-MI), chairman of the appropriations subcommittee, and Norman Mineta (D-CA), chairman of the Public Works and Transp. Committee, over demonstration projects in the bill which Mineta's committee had not authorized.

When H.R. 2490 was pulled from the House calendar, it included the same Amtrak numbers approved June 10 by the Appropriations Subcomm. on Transp. and June 22 by the full committee, and \$4,476.6 mill. in transit funding, up 17.8% from the FY '93 actual level of \$3,799.6 mill.

H.R. 2490 also says "no funds in this Act may be used, either directly or indirectly, to support the [Amtrak] Thruway Bus Service Program." If this language becomes law and Thruway service ends, Amtrak and the affected passengers, communities and independent bus companies all would be harmed, as would the taxpayer, since Amtrak's losses would rise. Greyhound may be at work here; Greyhound's Mar. 11 Senate Commerce testimony attacked California's "Amtrak" bus network"; NARP, in contrast, sees the California program as a model other states should copy. ■

## State Says Link Feasible; Congress Approves \$4 Mill.

## Congress Also Approves Amtrak's FY '93 Supplemental

*"For too long people were telling us it doesn't work. But nobody ever spent the time to find out in an intelligent way whether it worked or not."*

—Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Construction  
James J. Kerasiotes (*The Boston Globe*, June 8)

Congress approved a "son of stimulus" FY '93 supplemental appropriations bill on July 1 with \$20 million for Amtrak operations and \$25 mill. for Amtrak capital of which \$4 mill. is earmarked for "preliminary design and engineering of a rail link between North Station and South Station in Boston, MA."

[Pres. Clinton was expected to sign the bill quickly. It also includes money for summer jobs. The Amtrak capital money means maintenance work can continue at current levels through Sept. 30. The operating figure renders the FY '94 appropriation level more critical because, to survive FY '93, Amtrak will have to borrow some funds and repay them next year.]

Earlier, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction issued a report, "Building for an Intermodal Future: The North-South Rail Link," reciting the link's intercity and commuter benefits (see Aug. & Dec. '83, Apr. '88 and Apr. '91 *News*) and explaining how to build the link in the Central Artery alignment.

The Senate version of the supplemental included the \$4 mill. for the rail link. The conference report incorporates by reference Senate report language stating that, "in order to ensure that there be no delays in the central artery project associated with the potential rail link component, funds must be obligated immediately to conduct the design and engineering work." (The House-Senate conference committee reached agreement on the supplemental June 29.)

(Continued on page 4)

# Amtrak Faces House Appropriations Subcommittee

Under new Chairman Bob Carr (D-MI), the annual Amtrak hearing of the House Appropriations Subcomm. on Transportation lasted a few hours rather than all day and dealt mainly with broader issues. Some highlights of the May 5 hearing:

- **Amtrak Self-Sufficiency:** Amtrak Pres. W. Graham Claytor Jr., answering Carr's question about whether this goal could be reached by 2000: "We suggested 2000 as a goal three years ago, making it clear the goal was unobtainable without a substantial gain in capital support. The capital was not forthcoming on that level. It became clear a couple of years ago that 2000 could no longer be part of that goal."

Carr said "we need to chart a plan for self-sufficiency at some date. It would be a good goal to have, and to do it *before* these other grandiose goals [i.e., bullet trains and maglevs]. Mr. Claytor, you have been a supporter of incrementalism. But the *first* increment should be self-sufficiency. Second, perhaps getting all of the Northeast Corridor (NEC) truly high-speed. I co-sponsored H.R. 1919 [Clinton's high-speed bill, *May News*] only because of its emphasis on operational self-sufficiency for new systems."

Asked about a new target date for reaching self-sufficiency, Claytor said: "There is no use picking a date until we have the capital...[To reach self-sufficiency would require] a funding system guaranteed to get us what we need, like that one penny [of federal gas tax going to a passenger rail trust fund]."

- **Individual Routes:** Answering Carr's questions, Claytor said the "Sunset Limited" is doing "extremely well" and is "always sold out" since being extended to Miami Apr. 2; "Montrealer" is "the only train in northern New England; [I'd like] some new equipment to improve that train"; and Atlantic City Expresses do "well from distant cities. The Philadelphia trains did not work out as well, and we eliminated most of those."

Carr asked why Amtrak couldn't eliminate any train that was not covering short-term avoidable costs, moving rolling stock to a stronger route and thereby raise system cost recovery.

Claytor: "Any savings you come up with kicks in even higher labor protection costs, if it is the only train on a route." Carr then said that removing labor protection from the law "could happen."

Ronald D. Coleman (D-TX): "It's not just a labor issue...The bottom line is not everything."

Claytor: "That's right. [The "Empire Builder"] goes through areas...that have no other public transportation. That question was raised three years ago when we tried to reroute the train in North Dakota and miss [Rugby, Devils Lake, Grand Forks]. The entire Congressional delegation, state legislators and mayors, were all in my office having a conniption fit, saying it would ruin their communities. It is an important social service too. You have to look at the effect on the population, and on the environment, too."

David E. Price (D-NC) asked about North Carolina's second 403(b) train, which has been held up by delays in getting turning tracks in Charlotte and Raleigh. Amtrak Executive V.P. and Chief Operating Officer Dennis F. Sullivan told Price it would be "September or October at the earliest" before the "Piedmont" ran.

- **Advertising Fine Print:** Price referred to a March *Wall Street Journal* article about the failure of Amtrak ads to show discount restrictions. Norman: "We are now more careful about stating in large type that restrictions do apply...We use a general warning. [Customers] can find out more when they call...I'm satisfied that we have the strongest marketing organization in the industry and it's generally recognized as such by the airlines."

- **Beech Grove lay-offs:** Thomas M. Foglietta (D-PA) was concerned about possible additional lay-offs at Amtrak's Beech Grove, IN and Delaware shops. He asked Amtrak for an analysis of how management has been affected by the revenue downturns that caused the Beech Grove lay-offs last October.

- **Commuter Contracts:** Amtrak Executive V.P. William S. Norman said these "have reduced [Amtrak's] federal subsidy requirement by \$18 million [a year]." Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R-VA) said Virginia Railway Express would like to enlarge the First Street tunnel under Capitol Hill for bi-level commuter cars. ■

## WIRES TO BOSTON BY 1997

Amtrak hopes electric engines and yet-to-be designed trainsets will run through to Boston on electric power by the spring of 1997, although other project work will continue into 1999. This schedule means electrification work must begin next spring. Possible sources of delay:

- The environmental impact statement (EIS) process. The draft EIS should be available to the public in early to mid August. Public hearings are expected in late September; a final EIS at year's end.

- The Coastal Zone Management Act requires state certification that the project is consistent with federal and state coastal policy.

- The Clean Water Act requires state and Army Corps of Engineers certifications that the project is consistent with federal and state clean water regulations.

- Unless Congress declares this a federal project (possible in this year's high speed rail bill), numerous local permits (zoning, conservation commission, historic district) may be required from up to 41 communities from New Haven to Boston.

- The Providence & Worcester Railroad and the State of Rhode Island want the (federal) Northeast Corridor Improvement Project to pay \$100 mill. to upgrade/create a third track along the mainline (25 miles from Davisville to Boston Switch in Pawtucket) and to raise about 35 bridges high enough to allow tri-level auto carriers to reach the Port of Davisville. (Tri-level clearances do not exist today.)

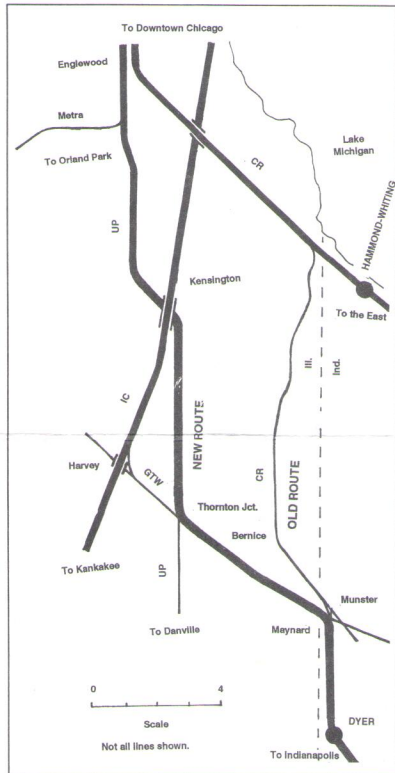
Amtrak plans to raise six bridges less than a foot to meet Amtrak's needs but to install catenary poles tall enough so wires could easily be raised later for tri-levels. (Rhode Island has agreed to fund a supplemental EIS for the third track.)

- Appropriations below \$175 million a year for improvements above New York.

Delays unrelated to contractor Morrison Knudsen's responsibilities could force Amtrak to pay penalties to MK.

## New Chicago-Indianapolis Route

Amtrak's "Cardinal" and "Hoosier State" began using a new, less-direct route in and near Chicago on June 30 to avoid Conrail's SC&S branch between South Chicago and Munster, IN (north of Dyer). No time will be added to schedules, which already reflected the Conrail line's bad condition and many 10-mph slow orders. The new route: Metra's Orland Park (Norfolk Southern) line from Chicago Union Station to 74th St., then short segments on NS and Belt Railway of Chicago freight lines, Union Pacific (ex-Chicago & Eastern Illinois) from 81st St. to Thornton Jct. and Grand Trunk Western back to the current route at "Maynard" in the town of Munster. Ultimately, Indiana ARP wants service to use a Conrail line straight north from St. John (south of Dyer); trains then would bypass Dyer but serve Hammond-Whiting. This would require building a connection at St. John.



NARP GRAPHICS/SCOTT LEONARD

ARP wants service to use a Conrail line straight north from St. John (south of Dyer); trains then would bypass Dyer but serve Hammond-Whiting. This would require building a connection at St. John.

## ATTENTION EAVESDROPPERS

Three Rivers Press has released *Trak Tables, A Scanner's Directory of Amtrak Road Frequencies*, by M. L. Gibson, listing radio frequencies in order of train number for the entire Amtrak system. Handy when your train is late and no one told you why. The 86-page, timetable-sized book is \$4.95 (plus postage and handling) from Three Rivers Press, P.O. Box 70285, Bellevue, WA 98007-0285; (206) 746-1907.

## "HOV = HOAX"

Last month, we reported critically about states failing to spend their federal ISTECA Congestion Management/Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. Also a problem: other states, including Maryland, spending CMAQ funds on HOV [high-occupancy vehicle] lanes—and HOV highways!—with no proven air-quality benefits. Virginia just announced plans to add yet another two lanes to its 22 miles of the Capital Beltway, the lanes to be HOV 24 hours a day! The following ran under the above lead headline in *Auto-Free Press* (May-June '93, from Transportation Alternatives, 99 St. Marks Pl., New York, NY 10009):

"...HOV lanes are promoted as a way to lure lone motorists out of their cars and into carpools. But the promise of time savings on the highway aren't great enough for many motorists to give up solo driving. Worse, lone drivers stuck in traffic resent what appear to be underused HOV lanes. Pressure quickly builds to turn over these lanes to single-occupant vehicles or at least to reduce the restrictions on their use—exactly what happened on northern Virginia's Dulles Toll Road carpool lane last year. Fearing a similar rebellion, Virginia's Governor Douglas Wilder eased restrictions on new HOV lanes on I-66 before they were even opened.

"Similarly, *Newsday* (with headquarters in Suffolk County) has called for scrapping HOV rules on the Long Island Expressway even before its new HOV lanes are completed...

"In theory, HOV lanes only work when regular lanes are jammed, thereby giving HOV lane users an incentive of faster travel. Rather than planning for long term congestion that HOV lane use is dependent on, highway planners and politicians must make clear to the public that proven tools like congestion pricing and traffic calming can eliminate congestion altogether. Everyone benefits from the smooth and efficient movement of people and goods, not private cars. The addition of new highway lanes under any guise in the New York City area should be halted immediately, and funds diverted to expanding and improving the region's transit systems...

"As plans for regional highway expansion disguised as HOV lanes become more public, transportation officials are coming under increasing fire from environmentalists. The Environmental Defense Fund has filed objections to New Jersey's plans to add new HOV lanes to I-287 in Morris and Somerset Counties.

"All of the talk of state transportation departments about highway expansion being good for the environment has obscured the genuine solution: more subways and streetcars, the *real* High Occupancy Vehicles." ■

## SENATE PENALIZES FUEL EFFICIENCY

The Senate-passed deficit reduction plan imposes a 4.3-cent-a-gallon fuel tax on most transportation except airplanes, even though the latest Oak Ridge National Laboratory figures (for 1990) show airlines consume 1.8 times more energy per passenger-mile than Amtrak. The House-passed BTU tax would hit all transportation equally. Since Dec. 1, 1990, Amtrak—but not airlines—has paid the 2.5 cents a gallon "deficit reduction" tax. Thus, if the Senate prevails in conference, Amtrak will pay 6.8 cents a gallon in special taxes the airlines escape.

Amtrak non-electric trains use about 90 million gallons of diesel fuel a year, so each tax penny raises operating costs \$900,000 (6.8 cents = \$6.1 million).

## BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN POLICIES OVERSEAS

Michael Replogle, co-author with NARP's Harriet Parcels of "Linking Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities with Transit" (Oct.-Nov. '92 *News*), has also written "Bicycle and Pedestrian Policies and Programs in Asia, Australia, and New Zealand." The report, filled with ideas adaptable to American cities, is available from NARP for \$18 (same price as for "Linking...").

**CORRECTIONS:** The Senate Commerce Committee's intercity bus oversight hearing was Mar. 11, not Mar. 25 as stated at the end of our June lead story....Our special June 17 letter to NARP members said the House subcommittee's Amtrak funding levels were higher than the subcommittee approved for FY '93. Actually, the subcommittee's Amtrak capital number was cut from \$175 mill. for FY '93 to \$100 mill. for FY '94. (\$165 mill. is what was finally enacted for FY '93.)

Senators George J. Mitchell (D-ME) and Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Governor William F. Weld (R-MA) deserve special praise for helping transform the Central Artery rail link from a dream NARP was virtually alone in promoting a few years ago to a serious project.

Even today, timing of construction on what is arguably the nation's most important unbuilt mile of railroad is unclear, but at least its feasibility—and compatibility with Central Artery Project construction—seems assured.

Space for a four-track tunnel would be preserved, though only two tracks would be built at first, the report suggests, between 1995 and 1998. The project is envisioned to include:

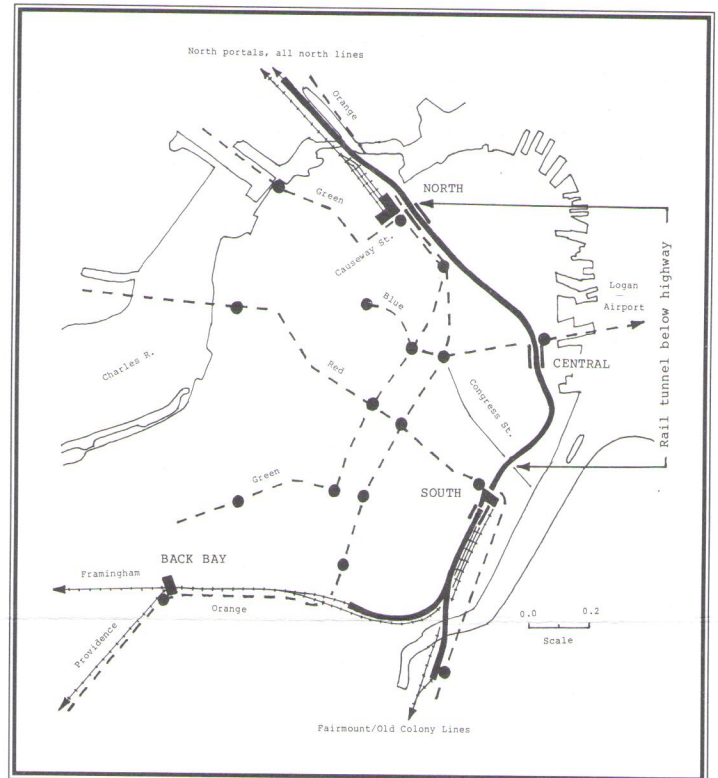
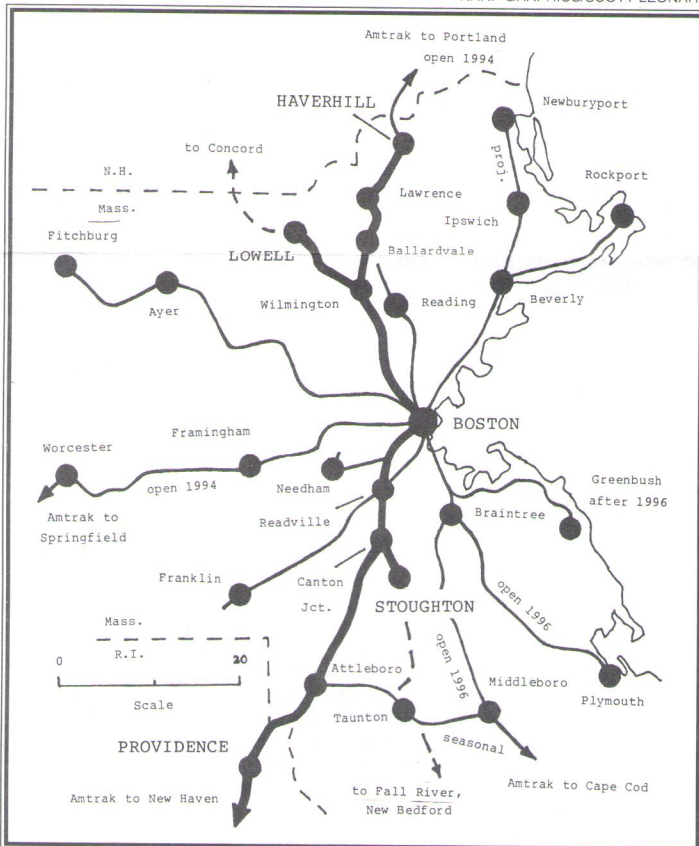
- a new Central Station near State Street (Acquarium station on MBTA's Blue Line, two stops west of the [Logan] Airport station) and new underground facilities at South and North Stations;

- extension of electrification to Haverhill on the Portland line and Lowell on the Concord (NH) line and on the four-mile single-track Canton Junction-Stoughton line to permit operation of Haverhill-Providence and Lowell-Stoughton services. (Other commuter trains would continue to be all-diesel and use existing North and South Station tracks, although track connections would permit direct moves between the rail link and all commuter rail and Amtrak lines including the forthcoming Old Colony services.); and

- pending further electrification, continued operation of trains from non-electrified lines to existing tracks at South and North Stations. [Planned construction atop tracks at both stations long has been envisioned to preclude diesels at "terminal" ends of trains, meaning diesel trains will have to be push-pull or will have to be wyed and backed into either terminal.]

MBTA's weekday commuter rail ridership is projected to rise from its present 70,000 to 177,000 in 2010 with the rail

NARP GRAPHICS/SCOTT LEONARD



NARP GRAPHICS/SCOTT LEONARD

link (vs. 120,000 without it). The present level, incidentally, is double the 1982 level.

Estimated cost of the rail link and the new station: \$1.3 billion; electrification of the three lines: \$514 million; additional MBTA trainsets: \$252 million.

(Send NARP an s.a.s.e. and \$1 for a summary of the state's report. To request a copy of the report itself, write to Secretary James J. Kerasiotes, Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116.)

The X-2000 was expected to visit Canada after July 26.

## TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

### Smoking on Amtrak Trains

Effective May 2, Amtrak banned smoking in *all* Superliner lounges. Thus, on Western long-distance trains including the Miami-Los Angeles "Sunset Ltd.," smoking is limited to a designated portion of one Superliner coach on each train (either downstairs or the last row upstairs) and—except on "Coast Starlight"—to sleeping-car rooms.

### Bikes on Trains

The PATCO rapid transit service between Philadelphia and Lindenwold, NJ began an on-board test in April during off-peak times; permit required.

From "A Users' Guide," published by Eurotunnel: "Cycles and their riders will be carried in special coaches on the shuttles [local trains using the tunnel under the English Channel], operated to a timetable between pick-up points in Calais and Folkstone." The tunnel will open sometime in 1994.