



PASSENGERS Voice

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CONGRESS LOOKS TO PASS LONG-TERM FY 2018 BUDGET

With Congress tied up in a larger fight over a tax bill, rail and transit advocates are finding themselves in a “hurry up and wait” mode as they prepare for the December battle to pass a long-term FY2018 budget—which includes many increases in passenger rail investment.

The current short-term budget, enacted just this September, only extends FY2017 spending levels through December 8 of this year. To clear this deadline, Congress must still clear a sizable number of hurdles. In addition to a tax bill, there are inter- and intra-party disagreements over a Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization bill, healthcare, and immigration—not to mention the normal competition to fund varying priorities that come with any budget battle.

While it is not clear when—or even if—there will be action in November on the FY2018 budget, NARP is asking advocates to be ready to push for the highest possible numbers for rail and transit as House and Senate leaders reconcile the differing spending bills. You can always find the latest at www.narprail.org/action.

NARP RE-BRANDS AS “RAIL PASSENGERS”



Welcome to the first edition of our monthly newsletter under its new name, Passengers Voice. As you’ll see over the coming months, the publication will still include many of the same types of stories you read in NARP News. Now, we hope to bring in more bylines from our members, and to highlight local and regional items of interest as we refresh our brand and look forward toward our next 50 years of advocacy for trains.

The new design for the newsletter is part of the new, overall “Rail Passengers,” brand we introduced this Fall. Just like Amtrak is the brand name for the National Passenger Railroad Corporation, Rail Passengers is still the National Association of Railroad Passengers.

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Current and Proposed Federal Budgets

Program	FY2017 Appropriated Levels	FAST Act FY2018 Authorized Levels	White House FY2018 Budget Proposal	House THUD FY2018 Budget	Senate THUD FY2018 Budget
Amtrak - National Network	\$1,167.00	\$1,085.00	\$525.00	\$1,100.00	\$1,085.00
Amtrak - NEC	\$328.00	\$515.00	\$235.00	\$328.00	\$515.00
Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Grants	\$68.00	\$230.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$92.50
Federal State Partnership For State Of Good Repair	\$25.00	\$175.00	\$26.00	\$500.00	\$26.00
Restoration & Enhancement Grants	\$5.00	\$21.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00
Total	\$1,593.00	\$2,026.00	\$811.00	\$1,953.00	\$1,723.50

“Without huge upgrades it’s hard to think about an increase in ridership because you can’t squeeze any more trains on the existing infrastructure.”

Robert Puentes, CEO of the Eno Center for Transportation on Amtrak’s “Ready to Build” campaign



RAIL PASSENGERS

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This issue has news through November 9, 2017.
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RE-BRAND, from p. 1

Our new logo is the most prominent feature of our new brand. Known as "The Window," the Rail Passengers logo is reminiscent of a train window. It is designed to represent your views, the passenger's view. We know every passenger has a different perspective, expectations, and needs from train service in this country. We want to make sure passengers are at the center of our association.

Over the next 50 years, we will push to make passenger rail a part of a larger interconnected transit system that puts safety, convenience and efficiency first. Rail Passengers will fight for better train service, advanced high speed rail lines, state of the art transit stations, premier onboard amenities, and most importantly, improved technology that will ensure safety and security on all trains.

While our new brand may feel different, our mission remains the same. The Rail Passengers Association is committed to preserving and enhancing America's national passenger rail network now, more than ever before. Fifty years ago, NARP was the only national member organization fighting for the preservation for trains. Fifty years from now, Rail Passengers will have preserved its legacy as the harbinger for a modern interconnected transit system.

Thank you for your continued and dedicated support and we look forward to working for you now and always.

MATHEWS TO ATTEND DUKAKIS-LED NORTH-SOUTH RAIL LINK TOWN HALL

On Wednesday, November 29, Rail Passengers' President & CEO Jim Mathews will participate in a panel discussion moderated by former Massachusetts Governor Mike Dukakis in Quincy, Massachusetts, concerning the benefits of the proposed North-South Rail Link (NSRL) to be constructed in Boston.

What Is the Rail Link?

The NSRL is a proposed, 1.5-mile-long tunnel that would connect Boston's North & South Stations, both currently terminals. The project would allow for more frequent and reliable commuter rail service and create a connected

regional rail network throughout Boston and New England. It would allow intercity train service connecting both Maine and New Hampshire to the rest of the Northeast Corridor. An August 2017, study by the Harvard Kennedy School, suggested it would also, "potentially boost economic development in both the Boston urban core as well as suburban communities."

The project was originally part of Boston's Central Artery Project,



South Station headhouse and subway entrances in Dewey Square.

better known as "The Big Dig." First planned in the 1980s, the NSRL was shelved due to the requirements to secure federal

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THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF AMERICA'S PASSENGER RAIL NETWORK

The Rail Passengers Association released a new economic report, "Dismantling A Transportation Network" as a rebuttal to the White House's call for FY2018 budget cuts that would hurt Amtrak. The study provides further evidence to show that Trump's anti-train budget proposal would disproportionately cripple the national rail network in 220 low-income communities, while maintaining service in wealthy areas.

As the report indicates, more than 144 million Americans living along long distance routes would be choked off from the rest of the U.S. and the economic benefits passenger rail brings. Conversely, those living in higher income communities--such as those in the Northeast Corridor between Washington D.C. and Boston--would remain unaffected.

"Investing in rail for the long-term should be a key priority for the next budget cycle," said Rail Passenger's President and CEO Jim Mathews. "Those in Congress who believe

that passenger rail is not profitable are mistaken. What they don't see is the big picture. A robust national--and international--intermodal transportation system is crucial to economic growth, especially in those rural and less wealthy areas where travel options are already limited."

Through investment, passenger rail has the potential to spur growth and development in communities across the country. As detailed in the report, the national rail network has a direct impact on the economy: Amtrak alone employs more than 20,000 people, and pours nearly \$1.6 billion worth of goods and services into the economy each year. For each \$1 million spent on station construction and improvement, Amtrak supports 23 indirect jobs. Simply put, the benefits of increasing passenger rail investment far outway the "proposed" benefits of cutting Amtrak's long-distance network.

Passenger rail has proven to be

a critical and less-subsidized part of an intermodal transit system. The new report shows that from 2008 to 2016, Congress spent \$143 billion on highways, which is more than three times what Amtrak has received since it was founded in 1971. For aviation, in FY2016 alone, some \$2 billion was transferred from the general fund to support air travel. Investment in all three of these networks creates an interdependent, intermodal transportation system that makes economic activity possible.

Thanks to dedicated advocacy, and the hard work of thousands of Americans across the country, Congress rejected the proposal to cut passenger rail. While this is a great feat, there is still much more work to be done, as Amtrak's funding can be easily put back on the chopping block.

For more information and supporting facts from "Dismantling A Transportation Network," please visit <http://bit.ly/RailPaxReport>.

DESTINATION OF THE MONTH: CHICAGO

From Nov. 2 to 5, Rail Passengers' hosted RailNation Chicago, which included a celebration of the association's 50th anniversary in the city it was founded in. As part of the celebration, we are highlighting Chicago and Chicago Union Station.

1 - Chicago Union Station opened in 1925 after 10 years of construction at the cost of \$75 million - about \$1 billion by today's standards.

2 - Starting in 1972, all Amtrak services in Chicago originated and terminated at Chicago Union Station.

3 - Union Station is set to receive a significant \$1-billion renovation, which includes \$22 million to reno-



The city of Chicago

vate the Great Hall and skylight.

4 - Every year 35 million people visit Chicago.

5 - In 2016, 238.6 million riders rode Chicago Transit Authority rail lines.

MAKING THE CASE FOR PASSENGER RAIL TO FISCAL CONSERVATIVES IN MISSISSIPPI

By Betsy Nelson

All of us like trains, but the case for passenger rail, especially in the rural south, is not about trains; it's about jobs, growing the economy, and creating the type of communities that our kids and grandkids will appreciate. That is the message I presented last month to the Harrison County Republican Party in Gulfport, MS.

In the rural south, if we lose our passenger rail and we lose our Essential Air Services (EAS), then we lose the link to the national transportation system that those transportation links represent. We lose the ability to compete as a region, as a connected region, at the national level and also at the international level. The rural south will lose the ability to create the types of jobs that will sustain our economy and move our communities forward.

Other rural regions from Maine to California, and places in between, realize that sensible types of investment in passenger rail and infrastructure--as part of a broader, comprehensive transportation grid--are critical for creating the 21st century economy that communities want. If smart investment choices are not made now in Mississippi and the broader Gulf

Coast region, those communities will be "closed for business."

The message of infrastructure investment resonates with Republicans and Democrats from Mississippi, because transportation, jobs, and growing a 21st century economy are--regardless of party--what is needed to move Mississippi and the greater Gulf Coast communities forward.

The federal government and the State of Mississippi have made commitments to invest in highways and EAS. They must also make the commitment to invest in passenger rail to create the comprehensive transportation system that will sustain Mississippi through the 21st century linking it to the southeast economically.

Sensible investment in transportation infrastructure will continue to bring high-tech manufacturing and tourism to Mississippi and enable us to retain and attract the best and brightest for generations to come.

If you are interested in having a representative of the Rail Passengers Association come speak to your civic organization, please contact me at bnelson@narprail.org.

ON THE MOVE

Local, state and federal transit agencies have seen several new hires and appointments in October. A few of them include:

- **Timothy Griffin** was hired as the new executive vice president and chief marketing officer for Amtrak and manages the rail agency's NEC, state-supported routes, and long-distance services. Griffin has 40 years' of experience in marketing for the transportation and travel industries.

- **Thomas Kotel** was appointed to the board of the Chicago Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), which oversees the the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and the Pace bus system.

- **Michael McLaughlin** was named the chief of rail transportation by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). In the new role, McLaughlin will oversee all DRPT freight- and passenger-rail initiatives.



Timothy Griffin is Amtrak's new executive vice president and chief marketing officer (Photo Credit: Amtrak)

STATE NEWS

MASSACHUSETTS SENATOR ERIC LESSER (D-Longmeadow) launched a new website that shares the views of community members on high-speed rail. Known as, "Rail Matters: Real Stories from Real People," Sen. Lesser asked people to share their stories on how the east-west rail line, between Boston and Springfield, would benefit their lives. Sen. Lesser, along with 40 rail advocates, met with state legislatures in October to advocate for a feasibility study for the line.

NASHVILLE MAYOR MEGAN BARRY announced plans for a major mass transit proposal, known as "Let's Move Nashville: Metro's Transportation Solution." The proposed plan includes a new light rail line, increased bus service, and a downtown tunnel.

The estimated cost of the proposed project is \$5.2 billion, and Mayor Barry is asking that voters approve the referendum in May. If approved, the project could have significant benefits for the state in terms of jobs, economic growth and tourism.

THE NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY is looking into a new pilot program that would see Amtrak service expand further north in Maine. Amtrak's Downeaster line currently runs between Boston, MA, and Brunswick, ME, but the NNEPRA wants to extend the service further with stops in Bath, Wiscasset, Newcastle and Rockland. The program is still in early stages, but NNEPRA hopes to begin seasonal summer service in 2018.

MEMBER BENEFITS

1 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/>

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

CONGRESS CONFIRMS WESTMORELAND TO AMTRAK BOARD

Congress approved former Republican Congressman Leon Acton "Lynn" Westmoreland of Georgia to the Amtrak Board of Directors for a five-year term. The Trump Administration raised concerns among passengers and passenger rail groups since--as a member of Congress--Westmoreland voted for 12 amendments that negatively targeted Amtrak and high-speed rail.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Westmoreland assuaged fears from senators of both parties over his voting record, saying he was committed to the National Network.

Westmoreland served in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials for six years, and prior to joining Congress owned a residential

and light commercial construction company.

Many passenger groups are concerned over Westmoreland's voting record.

He has voted at least twice to fully defund Amtrak—once for a failed amendment to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and once again in 2015.

Overall, he voted for 12 amendments in the 113th and 114th Congress that the Rail Passengers



Lynn Westmoreland
(Photo Credit: House of Representatives)

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END OF YEAR DONATIONS KEEPS ADVOCACY WORK STRONG

We've been busy this year.

Despite the signal sent by the White House's first so-called "Skinny Budget" in March – that America's heartland isn't worth investing in – Congress solidly funded Amtrak for the remainder of Fiscal 2017. It was an important victory, and it was your emails, your phone calls, your letters and your financial support that helped us secure Amtrak's budget through September with 6,000 legislative contacts.

When the White House doubled down with the release of the full Fiscal 2018 budget, slating again to slash Amtrak funding and especially funding for national network passenger rail, we were ready.

We launched the single largest campaign in the Association's history— "Towns Without Trains" including the



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highway funding. In 1993, Governor Weld authorized a feasibility study and in 2003 the Major Investment Study/Draft Environmental Impact Report was released. Unfortunately, Governor Romney cut the project completely, partly because of the cost estimates of the study.

Current Events

In 2015, an op-ed written by Governors Dukakis and Weld renewed the call for the construction of the NSRL and the North-South Rail Link Working Group was created to advocate for the project. Earlier this year, Governor Baker authorized MassDOT to spend \$1.5M on a new feasibility assessment.

In August, the Kennedy Business School at Harvard University worked with Congressman Seth Moulton's office to release a white paper on an updated cost estimate for the NSRL. The group of faculty and students found that, depending on the build options, the project could cost between \$4 and 6 billion,

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DEALS DEALS DEALS

With Winter just around the corner, now is the time to start planning your winter train getaways! Check out these great deals that take full advantage of the winter months.

Leavenworth, Washington - Tree Lighting Festival—Travel from Seattle to Leavenworth, the Northwest's Winter Wonderland, on the Leavenworth Snow Train! Thanks to Alki Tours, you can travel to Leavenworth on December 2, 9 and 16 to experience the one and only Tree Lighting Festival that will make your holiday season. For More information contact Alki Tours at 1-800-895-2554 or visit them online at www.alkitours.com.

Whitefish, Montana, Whitefish Mountain Resort — If you love to ski, take some time this winter to checkout one America's best mountains for skiing at the Whitefish Mountain Resort. The best way to get there, traveling on Amtrak's Empire builder! To set up your Whitefish Mountain excursion, be sure to contact Flathead Travel at 1-800-223-9380 or visit them online at www.flatheadtravel.com.

PASSENGER VOICE: ALASKA TO CLEVELAND WITH PLENTY OF LEG ROOM

We enjoy hearing from our members on why they enjoy taking the train to get where they need to go. To share your stories with us, please email them to narp@narprail.org.

Joseph Raymond Skrha; Kenai, AK

I am an attorney from the State of Alaska. I've lived in Alaska for 34 years and I rely on Amtrak for travel in the lower 48 states. At Least twice a year, I travel from Alaska to Cleveland, Ohio. As I suffer from an ailment that causes my legs to swell, I cannot fly for more than a

couple of hours without suffering extreme pain.

Consequently, I find that flying from Anchorage to Seattle or LA and taking Amtrak from there to Cleveland is much less painful, allows me to work in a private, first-class bedroom and gets me to my destination safely with much less pain.

I support Amtrak and wish Congress would expand Amtrak. Most, if not all, of the trains I travel on are holdout in first class. Even the coach cars appear crowded, without many empty seats.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVE MEMBERS

The Rail Passengers Association is looking for a few (or a lot) good members to join the Council of Representatives. All members in good standing are invited and encouraged to considering running for a seat on the Council, and help set and approve the overall policy and direction for the Association.

The next election for seats on the Council, which is volunteer run, will occur in January 2018, for a two-year term starting March 1, 2018. The Council consists of 112 elected state representatives, and the number of representatives per state is determined by an equally weighted ratio of the members in a given state and the state's number of U.S. Representatives. Every state has at last one Council Representative. The certified number of Council seats to be elected, per state, in January 2018 can be viewed at: www.narprail.org/about/leadership/state-reps-2018.

NARP is only as strong as the leaders who step up and share their time and talents in working towards our collective goals. Please consider becoming one of these leaders and help make a difference in the future.

Members interested in running for a seat on the Council must complete and submit a Candidate Information Statement to the Candidate Certification Committee for review and qualification by 11:59 p.m. local time on December 1, 2017. The form, as well as additional information about the Council, is available online at: <https://www.narprail.org/get-involved/join-the-council>.

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Association determined to be harmful to either Amtrak or high-speed rail.

Complicating matters, Westmoreland also voted to fully fund Amtrak in 2008, and his deputy chief of staff, Brian Robinson, issued a positive statement to the Clayton News-Daily about the economic impact: "There probably is a turning of the tide.

The congressman does see, with the high price of fuel, that trains are always going to be a part of how we get people from point A to point B, and freight, too, for that matter. But maybe it'll be an even bigger

UPCOMING EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES

Wednesday, November 29

Boston, MA North/South Rail Link Town Hall Meeting - Quincy, MA

Saturday, December 2

Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers Annual Meeting - Dearborn, MI

Saturday, December 2

Association of Oregon Rail & Transit Advocates (AORTA) - Portland, OR

Saturday, December 9

All Aboard Washington Annual Meeting - Lacey, WA

Saturday, December 9

All Aboard Arizona Fall 2017 Passenger Rail Summit - Tucson, AZ

Friday, December 15

Amtrak Cascades Service Event - Tacoma, WA

Please contact Bruce Becker to have a local, state or regional meeting added to the NARP calendar of upcoming events!

part than we had imagined."

The Rail Passengers Association reached out to Mr. Westmoreland directly to ask him to resolve these issues and outline his vision for Amtrak.

Rail Passengers' also worked directly with the Senate to extract promises from Mr. Westmoreland that, as a member of the Amtrak board, he would be committed to a strong and growing National Network, revitalizing Amtrak's aging fleet of equipment, and improving safety for Amtrak's passengers and employees.



WANT A CHANCE TO WIN 10,000 AMTRAK GUEST REWARDS® POINTS?: SEND US YOUR BEST PHOTOS

The Rail Passengers Association is asking passengers like you to be a part of our new identity. A great way to do this is through our new social media contest that will give nine lucky passengers 10,000 Amtrak Guest Rewards® Points, as well as other prizes like totes and luggage tags. To enter the contest, we are asking you, along with your friends and family, to share your favorite train-view photos via Instagram, Facebook or Twitter using the hashtag [#RailPassengers](#) and [@RailPassengers](#).

The pictures should depict what you see outside your train window. Whether it's a photo of countryside, oceans, forests or cities, we want to see what you see. Rail Passengers' staff will be evaluating the photos, and selected' images will be used as part of the Rail Passengers Association's new visual identity on the web, and in print. For additional information on how to enter, as well as guidelines for photo submissions, please visit www.narprail.org/news/blog.

DONATIONS, from p. 6

#Rally4Trains across 25 cities, which reached 17 Million Americans, ensuring the national network's service to 220 stations' safety into 2018. You might say that your association is punching above its weight.

While the White House level threat has been neutralized for the time being (don't expect it to suddenly disappear forever), your association is currently working with another issue on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue here in D.C.

Has a freight train delayed your Amtrak trip lately? In the past year, statistically more than half of passengers nationwide were, outside of the North East Corridor. Your association has petitioned the Supreme Court to review a case that

would pave the way for enforcement of on-time performance standards for passenger rail. Without these defined standards, freight is systematically prioritized over passenger trains, leading to chronic delays for long distance riders

To keep up this important work, please make a tax-deductible contribution today so we can build on what we've done! Also, as a thank you, we're offering DOUBLE the bonus Amtrak Guest Rewards® points for renewals through the end of the year! Visit:

railpassengers.org/donate

or send your check to:
Rail Passengers ATTN: Sam
1200 G Street NW STE 240,
Washington D.C. 20005

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much lower than the estimate that caused Gov. Romney to cancel the project years earlier. Modern tunneling technology and current federal project costs help account for the lower figures, even though it also included generous overrun allowances.

The Working Group created a series of "town hall" events to further educate the public on the importance and benefits of the project. These events are panel discussions, moderated by Gov. Dukakis, featuring local rail experts, environmental advocates, union workers, mayors, and state legislators. Successful town halls have been held in Salem, Framingham, and Franklin. The Quincy town hall,

featuring Jim Mathews, will be held in the Adams Lecture Hall of Quincy High School at 7 p.m. on November 29. Members are encouraged to attend. For more information visit the NARP website, at <http://www.northsouthraillink.org>, or the North-South Rail Link Facebook page.



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