



RAIL PASSENGERS
ASSOCIATION

PASSENGERS Voice

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ADVOCACY WORK SEES KEY VICTORY; MUST CONTINUE FORWARD

Rail Passengers won a key victory with the passage of the Fiscal Year 2019 Senate transportation funding bill, advancing robust funding for intercity passenger rail programs and securing the successful inclusion of an amendment that would prevent Amtrak from fragmenting the Southwest Chief route. However, recent moves from Amtrak suggest there are still reasons to worry about the ultimate fate of the Chief.

THE GOOD

The bipartisan amendment, authored by Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS), Tom Udall (D-NM), Roberts (R-KS), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Cory Gardner (R-CO), and Michael Bennet (D-CO) sets aside \$50 million for capital costs and states that Amtrak may not "initiate discontinuance of, reduce the frequency of, suspend, or substantially alter the schedule or route of rail service on any portion of such route."

The six senators also successfully passed a "sense of the Congress" amendment stating "long-distance passenger rail routes provide much-needed transportation access for over 4 million riders in 325 communities in 40 States and are particularly important in rural areas; and long-distance passenger rail routes and services should be sustained to ensure connectivity throughout the National Network" by an overwhelmingly positive vote of 95-4.

In addition to the SW Chief provision, the bill includes robust funding for Rail Passengers' priorities including \$1.3 billion for Amtrak's National Network; \$650 million for the Northeast Corridor; \$255 million for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety grants; \$300 million for Federal State Partnership for State of Good Repair grants; \$10 million for Restoration grants; \$9.9 billion for transit formula grants; \$2.5 billion for rail transit grants; and \$1 billion for BUILD grants.

THE BAD

Unfortunately, what was supposed to be an easy final passage has been complicated by news that Congressional GOP leadership will look to lower transportation spending levels in negotiations between the House and the Senate.

"We have our new allocations, and I will tell you that it was not what I would have hoped," said Senator Susan Collins, head of the Appropriations

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BATTLE FOR SOUTHWEST CHIEF CONTINUES

A widely shared *Trains* article reported from an Amtrak Town Hall event in Raton, NM that Amtrak would not run trains on track unequipped with Positive Train Control (PTC), even under Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) exemption, as in the case of the Southwest Chief. While Amtrak has subsequently denied that it made the statement, they have included PTC installation costs as a part of the capital rehabilitation of the portion of the Southwest Chief in question, in excess of FRA requirements.

While the *Trains* article extrapolated this as a threat to seven other Amtrak trains running on track with the same exemption, the Rail Passengers

SOUTHWEST CHIEF, p. 2

“As the divide between urban and rural communities in America continues to expand, passenger rail services like the Southwest Chief are invaluable in connecting Kansans to the rest of the country while also bringing visitors from out of state to our local communities.”

U.S. Senator for Kansas,
Jerry Moran



RAIL PASSENGERS

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This issue has news through August 30, 2018.
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SOUTHWEST CHIEF, from p. 1

Association office in D.C. is working with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to arrange a hearing on PTC and insure that the right questions are asked about exempted routes.

That said, the battle for the Southwest Chief remains one that will be won in Congress.

After a meaningful victory upon the passage of the Senate version of the transportation bill, H.R. 6147, which included amendments that direct funding specifically to maintain current levels of Southwest Chief service.

Now H.R. 6147 is on its way to the House, where the differences

ADVOCACY, from p. 1

Subcommittee on Transportation.

If cuts are made to transportation programs, it increases the imperative that passengers call their members of Congress to voice their support for the funding levels included in the bill. You can access the Rail Passengers campaign at www.RailPassengers.org/action.

THE UGLY

While the Senate was unmistakably clear about its support for the National Network, it appears that Amtrak is lobbying to remove the Southwest Chief amendment language during conference negotiations.

A week after the passage of

between the House and Senate versions of the bill can be reconciled and sent to the President for signing into law. This should have been a relatively simple process, but at time of writing, the conference deliberations for the bill have become more complex.

We have been asking members to call their Congressional Representatives about H.R. 6147 with an ask for two things:

- Pass the bill with all amendments pertaining to the Southwest Chief in tact
- Maintain the funding levels as passed by the Senate

While the first is still crucial for the Chief's continued operation, the second has become equally important. The transportation budget is being targeted for a cut, as the House bends to a demand to pay for the White House's

the Senate bill, Amtrak issued an employee advisory on the Southwest Chief announcing that no final decisions have been made on the route. [Read RPA's takedown of the claims in Amtrak's employee advisory.] They also issued a route analysis of the SWC that still identifies the bus bridge as the preferred alternative.

It's clear passengers have Congress on our side, but constituents must advocate loudly for this bill to make sure it isn't watered down in conference! Go to www.RailPassengers.org/action to join us in demanding a better future for the National Network! [Read more about our Southwest Chief campaign Battle for Southwest Chief Continues" on pages 1 and 2.]

desired wall along the country's southern border. We cannot say what part of the transportation budget may be targeted, keeping in mind that despite the larger than usual passenger rail allocation, passenger rail is still but a fraction of the overall budget. However, we need to reaffirm the levels passed in the Senate. If you have already called your representatives about the Southwest Chief amendments, it's time to do it again about funding levels. Please visit www.railpassengers.org/swc for more details, or call the House of Representatives switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

More locally, there are 65 communities that have signed on to the effort through local Mayors voicing support for the Southwest Chief. For those of you living in the states that the route operates and would like to help, please contact Betsy Nelson at bnelson@narprail.org or call 202-408-8362 extension 3209.

AMTRAK'S ROUTE ACCOUNTING: FATALLY FLAWED, MISLEADING & WRONG

In a new White Paper, the Rail Passengers Association explains how Amtrak misrepresents – and exaggerates – the public cost of providing passenger trains as a mobility choice for the entire nation. Faulty route accounting has, in turn, led to the popular misconception that the abandonment of long-distance trains will eliminate Amtrak's need for taxpayer funding. Nothing could be further from the truth. The funding needed for the Northeast Corridor dwarfs that of what's needed for the rest of the nation.

RPA's white paper explains the history of Amtrak's route accounting methodology and demonstrates that if Amtrak applied the more economically sound avoidable costing methodology to assess the

performance of its various routes, Amtrak's leadership team would not be working to replace the current national network with disconnected groups of short distance regional trains serving only a small number of major metropolitan areas.

The Rail Passengers Association asks Congress to require Amtrak to immediately halt all route, schedule and frequency reductions as well as recent on-board service modifications; then require Amtrak's leadership team to explain to, and gain the approval of, the Congress, the states and stakeholders of its vision of the passenger train system and service they envision for the future. Cover, concealment and stealth tactics are appropriate for a military operation but not for a government sponsored

enterprise whose purpose is to provide passenger train service to the nation.

For more than 13 years, Congress and other federal agencies have called for more accurate, precise and transparent reporting of Amtrak's component routes. Numerous arms of government including the Federal Railroad Administration, the USDOT Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the General Accounting Office have all found Amtrak's route accounting system deficient and not compliant with federal statute requiring disclosure of avoidable costs. The end result has been a false framing of Northeast Corridor services as "profitable" and the rest of the system as

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RAIL PASSENGERS LAUNCHING STATION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Communities across America have been affected by the de-staffing of train stations. Amtrak ticket agents have always provided more than just customer service. They are the friendly face that provides helpful information and directions for travelers, assist those who need help with luggage, support the special needs of passengers and provide insightful conversations about train travel.

Ever since Amtrak de-staffed more train stations this year, there has been an enormous outcry and opposition to the decision and RPA is stepping up to fill the void. Rail Passengers is launching its Station Volunteer Program in five states. Through the pilot program, set to roll out this fall, RPA will help concerned members and their communities organize and setup a successful station volunteer program.

A knowledgeable and informed volunteer can answer travelers' questions about Amtrak trains and services, promote rail advocacy, highlight local attractions, foster a spirit of hospitality and promote an inviting atmosphere at the station.

We are piloting in Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Michigan and Texas. Subsequent rollouts are being planned for Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota and North Carolina. A station volunteer program may be coordinated at the city level, or have a broader scope that addresses the needs of multiple communities along an Amtrak route.

If you would like to be trained and serve as a station volunteer, please send an email with your interest to volunteer@narprail.org.

Please stay tuned for additional information.

DESTINATION OF THE MONTH: SAN FRANCISCO

The Golden City

If you are looking for great weather and outdoor activities, excellent food, music, art, history and sports — all of which are easily accessible by public transportation — then look no further than San Francisco. The Golden City is known to many for all that it has to offer, and it attracts approximately 25 million pleasure and business visitors every year. Some, never wanting to leave.

The city is easy to access by passenger rail with four different Amtrak services connecting people from around the country to San Fran. So hop on California Zephyr, Capitol Corridor, Coast Starlight or San Joaquins, and enjoy your visit to the City by the Bay.

1 - As you are out and about walking, running or biking along the bay, it will be hard to miss the Golden Gate Bridge and not want to go across for a great view. A little known fact is that the U.S. Navy originally wanted to paint the bridge black with yellow stripes.

2 - Of course you'll want to jump on a San Francisco cable car, too. These cars are the only National Historical Monument that move in addition to



San Francisco cable car.

(Photo Credit: San Francisco To Do)

carrying people for transportation. The cables that the cars run on move at a speed of 9.5 MPH.

3 - Combining music and history, the Beatles performed their last full show at Candlestick Park on August 29, 1966. The last event at Candlestick Park was a concert by Paul McCartney in August 2014 before the stadium was demolished in 2015.

4 - Wine lovers love San Francisco. North of the city is Wine Country, which is made up of Napa Valley and Sonoma Valley, among others. Combined, this area is home to more than 400 wineries, most of which are perfectly situated for a day trip from the city.

5 - Interested in seeing Chinese culture and trying authentic Chinese food? Make your way to San Francisco's Chinatown. It is alive with people, stores, temples, restaurants and more. It is also the oldest Chinatown in North America and is home to one of the largest Chinese populations aside from Asia.

ON THE MOVE

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

• **Boris Lipkin** The California High-Speed Rail Authority appointed Boris Lipkin as its Northern California regional director where he will work on engagement with stakeholders in the area for HSR development. Lipkin has been with the Authority since earlier this year, serving as the acting

regional director for the region.

• **Kimberly Yu** Southern California's Metrolink has promoted Kimberly Yu to Chief Operating Officer. Yu was previously working as the agency's deputy COO for planning and project delivery, where she helped develop a more transparent budget process, led efforts to improve fare collection and created key performance indicators for departments.



Kimberly Yu was promoted to COO at Metrolink

(Photo Credit: Metrolink)

STATE NEWS

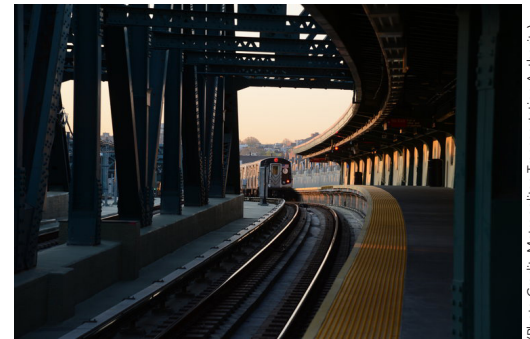
THE “FAST FORWARD” PLAN BY THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY’S (MTA)

New York City Transit is estimated to cost \$40 billion over the course of 10 years. The plan to repair and upgrade the city’s subways and buses was first revealed in May, but it was released without a cost associated with it. The rail portion of the project will involve upgrading the city’s subway system’s signals and track infrastructure, as well as installing communications-based train control on 16 lines.

BRIAN KELLY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY (CHSRA)

defended the agency’s recent business plan to move the high-speed rail line forward during a House rail subcommittee hearing. Called by chairman of the House rail subcommittee Rep. Jeff Denham (R-Turlock), the hearing allowed for

questions about the project’s progress, financing and delays, and environmental reviews on different segments of the HSR line.



A New York City subway.

(Photo Credit: Metropolitan Transportation Authority)

Despite missing construction deadlines, Kelly said that CHSRA has met all federal funding deadlines for the project. Although two segments of the line have not procured funding yet, Kelly said that there is enough money to complete several other segments and the state will soon see economic benefits.

RAIL STATION OF THE MONTH: TRANSBAY TRANSIT CENTER

San Francisco’s New Transbay Transit Center Has Room to Grow

San Francisco is the 13th biggest city in the U.S. by population. People commuting to and from the city rely heavily on public transportation services such as buses, passenger trains, bike shares and even ferries. One of the new and major transportation highlights of the city is the new Salesforce Transbay Transit Center, which opened on August 12, 2018. It’s not only a center for current and future transportation options for travelers, but it is an intermodal hub with stores, restaurants, and a park that city officials hope will be an equivalent to Grand Central Station in New York. It is expected that 100,000 people will pass through it everyday. So as you make your way to San Francisco, make sure you stop by the new Center and keep these five items in mind:

1 - The six-level (two below ground and four above) transit hub was designed by Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects and it is like no other transit station. It stretches for three city blocks between Beale and Second streets in the East Cut neighborhood, and it is approximately 1.2 million square feet. It was designed and built as a destination to gather, not just traverse through.

2 - Although the Transbay Transit Center is open, only Phase 1 has been completed, which provides bus service for travelers. Phase 2, known as the Downtown



Aerial view of the Salesforce Transbay Transit Center.

(Photo Credit: Brock Keeling)

Rail Extension will add an underground terminal station for Caltrain and California High-Speed Rail service and is expected to open in 2028.

3 - There is a 5.4 acre city park on the roof of the new Center. It includes 10 different gardens and a walking path that spans .055 miles, as well as an amphitheatre.

4 - Have an eye for art? The Grand Hall in the Transit Center will house regular public-art displays, and art is featured throughout the floors, fountains and walls of the center. It is currently showcasing art from James Carpenter, Julie Chang, Jenny Holzer, and Ned Kahn.

5 - Not only is the Transit Center looking to house stores and restaurants, such as local coffee shop Philz Coffee, but it will also be home to a local gym and a dental clinic.

JOIN RAIL PASSENGERS AS AN ORGANIZATION

RPA has created new Organizational Membership categories to allow Businesses & Corporations, Professionals, Public Agencies, Non-Government Entities, Foundations, Educational Institutions and Government & Policy representatives the opportunity to participate in and support RPA communications and educational activities.

“A Connected America” - Membership Supports the Work That We Do.

Organizational Members Benefits Include:

- Membership status for multiple staff members

AMTRAK, from p. 3

“unprofitable.” Neither can exist without federal taxpayer support.

Congress should demand that Amtrak comply with the already in place laws, regulations and Congressional mandates and make public the financial performance of each individual route employing the avoidable cost methodology. In the interim, Congress should require Amtrak to refrain from any further route and/or on-board service reductions until the Amtrak senior management

- Access to RPA’s extensive policy document library and professional analysis
- Consultations with RPA’s professional staff on transportation policy issues
- Access to RPA’s extensive policy analysis capabilities and research expertise
- Marketing, Sponsorship and Underwriting opportunities

For additional information on standard or custom memberships contact: Mark Colucci, VP Resource Development, mcolucci@narprail.org.

team reveals its plans for the future of the national system and the economic analysis underlying any such plans are made available to the public for scrutiny, analysis and agreement. Congress must assert oversight of Amtrak -- a Government Sponsored Enterprise – and not allow Amtrak to operate by stealth and deception. “Sunlight is the best disinfectant.”

To read the full paper, please visit www.railpassengers.org/accounting.

RAIL PASSENGERS TRAVEL ADVISORY

• BWI THURGOOD MARSHALL AIRPORT STATION WAITING ROOM RELOCATED

- Crews began renovation work at the BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport station on August 27. During work the existing station building will be closed and Amtrak passengers will have to use a temporary facility located to the north. The temporary building will include staffed ticket offices and an ADA accessible seated waiting room. Signage on the platforms will direct customers to the temporary station. The taxi pick up location will be outside the temporary station and service to MARC and Amtrak trains will remain unchanged.

• TRACK WORK CONTINUES ON EMPIRE BUILDER

- Through October 3, 2018 track work will continue to be performed along the Empire Builder and may cause delays to in service.
- Eastbound Train 8 will hold up to 60 minutes between Winona and La Crosse, departing no earlier than 11:47 am.
- Train 8 will operate the later schedule through to Chicago, please check Amtrak.com for up to date schedule times.

Upcoming Regional Rail Passengers Association and State Passengers Association Member Meetings & Events

Thursday, September 13

**'Trains Not Tolls' In Support Of MARC's
Brunswick Line - Frederick, MD**

Saturday, September 15

**On Track Kentucky General Meeting -
Bowling Green, KY**

Saturday, September 22

**Colorado Rail Passengers Association Fall
Meeting - Englewood, CO**

Saturday, September 22

**Rail Passengers Association of Alabama
Annual Meeting - Cullman, AL**

Saturday, September 29

**RailPac California 2018 'Steel Wheels'
Conference - Sacramento, CA
Registration is NOW Open!**

Saturday, September 29

**Empire State Passengers Association
Meeting - Schenectady, NY**

Saturday, October 27

**Wisconsin Association of Railroad
Passengers Fall Meeting - Pewaukee, WI**

Please contact Bruce Becker (bbecker@narprail.org) to have a local, state or regional meeting added to the Rail Passengers calendar (print and online) of upcoming events!

RPA's RailNation Miami THE Rail Passenger Advocacy Event of 2018!

Event Dates:

**Friday, October 19th through
Sunday, October 21st**

Event Details:

Three days packed with an exciting array of presentations, speakers, exhibits, tours and events, including an exclusive chartered Brightline trip on Friday.

Event registration is NOW available!
Don't delay; space is limited; register
TODAY!

Event Host Hotel: Hyatt Regency Miami
- 400 SE 2nd Avenue in Downtown
Miami

**Discounted group-rate hotel
reservations are available through
September 22.**

**Reserve your seat on the Friday
afternoon, 10/19, RPA Chartered
Brightline Trip. Seats are limited!**

**Visit The RailNation Miami Event
Page for complete information, to
make a reservation, and to register.**

***We look forward to seeing you
in Miami!***



WINNER OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTEST

Josh Stephens from Santa Cruz, California, submitted the latest RPA #ViewsFromATrain Grand Prize winning photo. Stephens captured this dynamic shot from the California Zephyr outside of Chicago, Illinois. His photo caption sums up our thoughts perfectly: "If you were ever trying to discover the states you haven't seen, the railways are a great place to start."

We're looking for our next big winner! Submit your travel photos on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter by tagging @RailPassengers and using #ViewsFromATrain or #RailPassengers.



(Photo Credit: Josh Stephens)

View from the California Zephyr outside of Chicago.



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