



PASSENGERS Voice

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TRUMP, DEMS TARGET \$2T FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

President Donald Trump and Democratic Congressional leaders have agreed in principle upon an ambitious \$2 trillion bill to fix America’s crumbling infrastructure. However, GOP leadership have responded by stating they wouldn’t advance any bill that doesn’t include financing, while simultaneously ruling out any tax increases.



The media focused on the April 30th bipartisan agreement to go big on infrastructure immediately following the meeting, with the White House and Democrats striking an agreement to develop a \$2 trillion infrastructure package and reconvene in three weeks.

“We have to invest in this country’s future and bring our infrastructure to a level better than it has ever been before,” White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said in a statement following the meeting. “We will have another meeting in three weeks to discuss specific proposals and financing methods.”

“The good news here is we agreed on a big package and now it’s up to the president and the White House to tell us how they pay for it,” Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) told reporters.

“It was repeated over and over again that unless he is willing to come up with the pay-fors for this large package, it will never get done, and he agreed.”

RAIL AND TRANSIT ARE GUARANTEED A PLACE IN ANY INFRASTRUCTURE PACKAGE.

Rail advocates had particular reason to be pleased over the discussions, with Congressional leadership promising that the transportation section of **INFRASTRUCTURE**, p. 2

AMTRAK EYES NEW LONG-DISTANCE EQUIPMENT

After years of working up the courage, Amtrak telegraphed to Congress recently that it intends to ask for more money to get new and refurbished equipment in service on the long-distance trains. In a series of meetings with Rail Passengers President Jim Mathews, Amtrak asked the Association to supply critical input on passenger needs and desires as the railroad’s new fleet plan takes shape.

Of crucial interest to Rail Passengers members, the railroad told Congress in its new fleet plan – sent to Congress in late March – that it wants to start replacing elderly Superliner I cars in the long-distance fleet three years from now. Amtrak’s fleet planners anticipated a \$1.5 billion order kicking off in 2022 and completing by 2026.

EQUIPMENT, p. 2

“We’re talking about surface transportation—roads, bridges, highways, transit—and how to find a way to pay for that.”

House T&I Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR)



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EQUIPMENT, from p. 1

In the meantime, Amtrak also wants between \$400 million and \$450 million to refresh the Superliner I fleet, or at least those cars that are mechanically sound enough to be refreshed. Refresh work is generally limited to parts that can be changed quickly so that changeouts – such as seat cushions, carpets, flooring, exterior decals and so forth – can be accomplished overnight or simply added in to regular preventive maintenance visits. But more extensive work is also possible, and Amtrak says that it's assessing mechanical features for refresh under its Superliner Life Extension Study.

Amtrak also addressed the Fleet Plan's financial needs in its Fiscal 2020 legislative grant proposal to Congress, asking for money not just for corridor expansion but for the National Network as well.

The railroad specifically requested that lawmakers "authorize dedicated, sustainable federal funding for capital improvements, for both the NEC and National Network. This will help Amtrak improve its ability to plan, especially for major projects that require multiple years' worth of funding."

The request also specifically highlighted the need to buy new equipment for the National Network, asking Congress to "amend programs and funding levels to address the imminent need to renew much of Amtrak's rolling stock." Noting that the diesel-powered fleets are at least 20 years old or older, and that the Amfleet I, Amfleet II and Superliner I fleets are "approximately 40 years old, with some equipment even older,"

EQUIPMENT, p. 5

INFRASTRUCTURE, from p. 1

the bill would focus on more than just laying asphalt. "We're talking about surface transportation—roads, bridges, highways, transit—and how to find a way to pay for that," House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) said at a field hearing to tour Amtrak's Hudson River tunnels project.

Defazio also singled out Amtrak's Northeast Corridor as critical to the national transportation system.

"I can guarantee [the Hudson River tunnels are] one of the projects that will be included in those designations but we need more funding," added the Congressman from Oregon. "I'm writing the bill in my committee and it's going to include projects of national and

regional significance."

TEMPERS FLARE OVER REVENUE

Initial reports coming out of the White House meeting suggested President Trump was willing to set aside Republican orthodoxy to make sure a deal got done.

"I'll lead on this," Trump told Congressional leadership. "I would like to do something. It may not be typically Republican."

However, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) both said they're categorically opposed to rolling back recent tax cuts on the highest earners—Senator Schumer's preferred financing proposal—and weren't interested in raising the gas tax,

which has gone unchanged since 1993.

Some House Democrats fired back at the Republican response to the White House's infrastructure proposal.

"No one wants to jump over the cliff first," DeFazio added, referring to raising the gas tax, which currently is not even indexed to inflation. "No one has to jump first if we agree we can step up together... We've just got to go together with a joint purpose for something that's going to benefit the whole country, and I think that we can do that."

Rail Passengers has outlined its own vision for infrastructure, which you can find at RailPassengers.org/Blueprint.

RAILNATION CALIFORNIA IN SACRAMENTO

Make plans now to attend the Rail Passengers' **RailNation California Advocacy Symposium** in Sacramento, Friday, October 18 – Monday, October 21, 2019.

This event will bring rail advocates & supporters from across the nation to California's beautiful capital city for four days of educational opportunities, along with a variety of regional tours & trips. A Welcome Networking Reception is being planned for Friday evening and Saturday will feature a full day of Advocacy Symposium sessions, focused on three main topics – Transportation

Inclusion & Equity; The Future of Rail and The Traveler Experience. The Rail Passengers' Council of Representatives will meet on Sunday morning. In addition, there will be plenty of free time to explore Sacramento, America's premier **Farm to Fork** food & wine destination.



California's State Capitol
(Photo Credit: Wikipedia)

Discounted group rate rooms are now available at the host hotel, the historic Sheraton Grand Downtown (only two blocks from the state capitol); space is

limited so don't delay. And **event registration and tour/trip ticket purchase** is also now open!

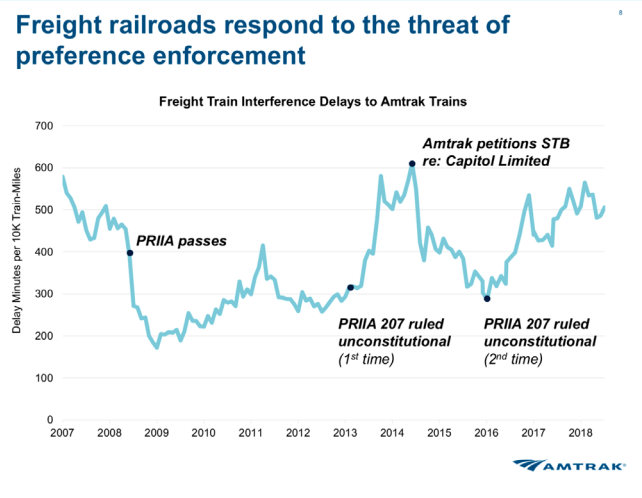
AMTRAK IS ISSUING A REPORT CARD - AND TAKING ITS GLOVES OFF

(Reprinted from May's digital newsletter)

According to Amtrak, the nation's Class I freight railroads got a 'C' average for handling trains on time last month. Canadian Pacific was head of the pack with an 'A' grade, while Norfolk Southern has grounded the curve for this heavyweight class with an 'F' grade for service. Those of you that were on the Crescent last month, a train that runs on NS tracks with an abysmal 29% on time performance rating, no doubt know why.

Amtrak has been aggressively broadcasting its new ranking system, with exchanges of note coming from the @AmtrakAlerts twitter account. Norfolk Southern took umbrage at this approach, demanding that the tweets cease or else threatening that the railroad would "be forced to consider further action." The passenger carrier responded that "our passengers have every right to know why they are being delayed, and Amtrak is duty-bound to tell them."

17 out of 28 State supported routes were less than 80% on time, as were 14 out of 15 long distance trains. To highlight the very real effect that host railroad operations have on this performance, Amtrak has adopted this simple 'report card' grade to call greater attention to a problem that will be all too familiar to passengers.



Freight Railroads have responded in the past to direct legal action, but larger public perception of the issue has been murky at best – a problem Amtrak's "report card" looks to solve. Rail Passengers' formal ask to your federal legislators for Amtrak's upcoming 2020 reauthorization has included what is called a 'Private Right of Action' which would establish an enforcement

mechanism of Amtrak's preference. It would establish a precedent not unlike the passage of PRIIA, as illustrated in the accompanying graph.

Learn more about all of this and take action on your own at www.railpassengers.org/ontime

#RAIL PASSENGERS TRAVEL REVIEW

Feedback on your recent Amtrak travel experience is very important to us! Please take a moment and tell us the good & the bad of your journey. Share your thoughts at railpassengers.org/travelreview or scan the QR code from your mobile device.



Remember, the progression of the data we collect depends upon the feedback you provide as well as your outreach to other rail passengers. Please help us to keep this going. If you have any constructive feedback or suggestion, please send an email to TravelReview@narprail.org.

#VIEWSONATRAIN

We are sharing many of the great photos we have received on Instagram (www.instagram.com/railpassengers).

We are also still looking for more submissions. Photos can be submitted via Instagram, Facebook or Twitter depicting your experience as "The Rail Passenger" and your views from a train. Rail Passengers Association executives will be judging the photos, and the winners' images will be used as part of our new visual identity on our website, in our monthly newsletter, on social media, and more!

When submitting your photos on social media, be sure to use the hashtag [#ViewsOnATrain](https://twitter.com/ViewsOnATrain) and tag [@RailPassengers](https://twitter.com/RailPassengers).

LEAVE A LEGACY

Please consider the Rail Passengers Association in your will. If you have already included us in your estate plans, let Jonsie Stone know at jstone@narprail.org or 202.408.8362 Ext. 3207. We'd like

to thank you for your generosity and make sure the purpose of your gift is understood.



Summer By Rail is perhaps the greatest internship in America. Started in 2016, each summer the Rail Passengers Association sends its paid intern correspondent on a month-long cross-country trip by train to see America.

On their journey, the correspondents report on the rail passenger network from inside the train. They talk with passengers about how they use transportation to work, live and play. They meet with mayors and government officials in big cities and small towns on planning issues. And, they sample the local food, drinks, entertainment and recreation that is available through the passenger rail network.

SUMMER BY RAIL 2019

For 2019, Rail Passengers has decided food and local food culture reachable by train will be the focus. We will be introducing the intern and route in the coming weeks. Stay tuned to summerbyrail.com for updates.

INDIANA TO LOSE DAILY PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE TO CHICAGO AS OF JULY 1ST

The following statement was written by Steve Coxhead, President of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance and longtime member of Rail Passengers Association.

The new Indiana budget has been passed and does not contain funding for the Hoosier State train service, connecting Indianapolis and Chicago, via Crawfordsville, Lafayette, Rensselaer and Dyer. The service will, therefore, be discontinued by Amtrak as of July 1st, 2019. This will be the first time in several years that Indianapolis will lack a daily rail connection to Chicago.

The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) is disappointed and puzzled by Governor Holcomb's action in removing the Hoosier State line item from the state budget. This was done in spite of widespread support for continuance of the service.

All unbiased analyses show Chicago-Indianapolis as a high priority, high travel corridor that with the right investment, appropriate frequencies and trip times would bring benefits to consumers and communities along the route, and offer all travelers a safe, economical alternative to driving.

IPRA, in partnership with other stakeholders, will continue to explore alternatives to developing the Hoosier State corridor, other than by means of an INDOT contract with Amtrak. Possibilities include some form of Federal investment, operation by private sector partners, and operation by a regional authority of counties served by the corridor. The model for this last would be the Northern Indiana Commuter

Transportation District (NICTD), operating rail passenger service in NW Indiana, connecting Chicago and South Bend.

IPRA, and Rail Passengers Association, will continue to advocate for the development of modern, 21st Century, passenger rail service in the Hoosier



Hoosier State at Dyer, IN
(Photo Credit: WBEZ/Michael Puente)

State corridor, and throughout Indiana. For further information, please contact the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance, at info@indianahighspeedrail.org.

In the coming weeks we will be developing a comprehensive strategy to return daily service to Indiana. In the meantime, we encourage Indiana RPA members to start having conversations with their state representatives—and write letters to the editor of their local papers—about the idea of creating a regional authority composed of the counties directly served to launch an improved service in the place of the Hoosier State, optimized for local communities along the line, and controlled by local communities along the line, to finally give Indianans the service they deserve.

EQUIPMENT, from p. 2

Amtrak warned that "safety standards and passenger expectations have changed a great deal over the decades, and no amount of refreshing and rebuilding can address structural maintenance issues with these fleets."

In the coming weeks, Rail Passengers' DC staff will

be assembling small working groups at Amtrak's request to consult alongside Amtrak planners working on new and improved designs for coach, dining and sleeping car amenities as well as other customer-facing areas. This new level of involvement is very welcome and we look forward to sharing the results of this work as it unfolds.

THE RAIL PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE OUR NEW ANNUAL PARTNER, TALGO, INC.



RAIL PASSENGERS MEMBERS SHARE THOUGHTS, POLL RESULTS

QUESTION...

IN CELEBRATION OF MOTHER'S & FATHER'S DAY, HAVE YOU TRAVELED BY TRAIN WITH YOUR PARENTS?":



A. Yes

B. No

Click here to submit your answer to this poll on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/narprail>,

OR

Send in your response via email to: survey@narprail.org.

Late last year we began conducting polls on social media and in our newsletters to spark conversation and provide another outlet for you to share your thoughts on rail.

In last month's poll question, we asked: "If you had true high-speed rail where you live, would you take it?"

Not surprisingly, this question garnered a big response! And reflective of our fast-paced society **81%** answered 'Yes – The Faster The Better Please', while only **19%** said 'No – A Leisurely Trip Is Just Fine'

The submitted comments included:

- **Marian Hukle** – "Just returned from visiting family in Japan. Took the high-speed Shinkansen all over! It was wonderful. I take Amtrak on a regular basis and would love to see an upgrade."
- **Grant Haynes** – "Make it clean, frequent and affordable; do that and you'll have strong ridership even if it isn't high-speed."
- **Paul Meyer** – "I live in New Orleans, so would ride high-speed trains to Houston, Dallas, Memphis, Atlanta and Orlando. We need to start building world-class, high-speed rail lines all across the country."

STATION OF THE MONTH: GLACIER PARK... CONTINUING TO CELEBRATE THE EMPIRE BUILDER'S 90TH ANNIVERSARY

No other major national park in the United States owes its very existence to a railroad more than does Montana's Glacier National Park. Created on May 11, 1910, Glacier National Park came about because of intense lobbying by environmentalists and the Great Northern Railway, which would come to be much of the park's Southern boundary. Great Northern built most of the park's first roads, as well as numerous hotels and chalets in and near the park – many of which continue in use today. In 1932 through the efforts of Rotarians in Alberta and Montana, Glacier National Park united with adjacent Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta, Canada to become Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park to celebrate the peaceful boundary between the United States and Canada, the first such entity of its kind in the world.

Glacier Park station (known locally as East Glacier Park) has always been the primary railroad gateway to the park, astride the iconic Glacier Park Lodge (in continuous service since 1913). Amtrak began operating the Empire Builder through Glacier Park station in 1971. In 1973, Amtrak discontinued



Photo Credit: Mark Meyer

East Glacier Park, MT

the Glacier Park stop during the long winter season in favor of a stop in nearby Browning. Glacier Park replaces Browning as the local stop during the height of park visitation, mid-Spring to early Fall – the only such arrangement in the Amtrak system. In addition to Glacier Park Station, Whitefish, West Glacier Park (Belton), and Essex are year-round stops for the Empire Builder which also allow easy access to wonders of Glacier National Park.

STATE NEWS

By Roger Clark, RPA Council Representative for Arizona & All Aboard Arizona Vice President

A summary of the All Aboard Arizona Spring Summit that was held on April 13th in Mesa, AZ

- **Wulf Grote**, Director, Capital and Service Development of Valley Metro brought us up to date with the Gilbert Road extension and the new proposed South Central route.
- **Steve Roberts**, President, RailPAC of California, talked about working with California and the western states to preserve the national network.
- **Peter LeCody**, Chairman of the Board, RPA, assured us that RPA was working with Amtrak to convince them to save the interstate system, repair and replace the long distance passenger fleet and return dining service. Amtrak re-



authorization and funding is a major staff focus.

- **Jim Souby**, ColoRail, President, shared his expertise in saving the Southwest Chief and his work with the Colorado Front Range and the Ski Train.
- Our Executive Director, **Tony Trifiletti**, gave a summary of his work on the formation of a Western National Network Interstate Trains Coalition and his contacts with city, county and state officials.
- **Chuck Mott**, All Aboard Arizona, President, reviewed our efforts on the Phoenix-Tucson proposal.

For more information on All Aboard Arizona, please go to <http://www.allboardarizona.org/>

Note: If you have a statewide or local event, project, or story that you would like to highlight - email our Northeast Field Coordinator Joe Aiello at jaiello@narprail.org and ask to submit.



ON THE MOVE

There have been several key rail industry appointments in recent months. A few of them include:

- **Dennis Newman** has been appointed to the position of Amtrak's Executive Vice President, Planning & Strategy responsible for corporate planning and strategy, schedule & consist planning, Amtrak's services and host railroad groups, and the company's participation in the Gateway Program. Newman had previously served as Vice President, Planning, Strategy & Research, having joined Amtrak in December 2017. Previously he was Vice President, Sales at the Dish Network and before that he worked at Northwest Airlines

and Delta Airlines for more than 17 years, in a series of significant planning and scheduling roles.

- **Cynthia Garneau**, currently President of Bell Helicopter Textron Canada, has been named as VIA Rail Canada's next President & CEO, for a five-year term effective May 9. Garneau replaces outgoing President/CEO Yves Desjardins-Siciliano. Prior to joining Bell Helicopter in 2004, Garneau held various leadership and technical roles at Bombardier Aerospace. She holds Bachelor of Specialized Education and Bachelor of Law degrees from Sherbrooke University.

- **Michael McLaughlin** was named the chief of rail



(Photo Credit: Amtrak)

Dennis Newman

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.



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