



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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(This has news through September 30. No. 9 was mailed September 16.)

RETURN REQUESTED

More Trains For Congestion Relief

Crisis in Sky Spurs Northeast Governors' Call for Faster Trains

Road & Air Congestion Leads to State 'San Diegan' Study

Will Other States Act BEFORE Congestion Paralysis Hits Them? Where is U.S. DOT?

"Instead of lobbying for more airports [NATION, Sep. 1], the administration should push a cheaper, more rational solution: fast trains.

"Already, on the New York-Washington run, many trains take under 3 hours and Amtrak has 1/3 of the air-plus-rail market. But, while 40% of domestic flights out of Boston go to New York, Boston-New York by train takes almost 5 hours. Trains are even slower—or nonexistent—in most other U.S. corridors. The under-used rail lines present an opportunity the nation cannot afford to ignore any longer."

—Sep. 2 letter from NARP to Time magazine

Claiming passenger train improvements are needed "to avert an airborne gridlock in the skies over the Northeast that threatens to cripple travel for millions and strangle our regional economy," Massachusetts Gov. Michael S. Dukakis on July 28 rode Amtrak from Boston to Rye, NY. There, the Coalition of Northeast Governors, at his urging, passed a resolution creating a joint public-private sector task force to work toward a Boston-New York rail travel time of 3 hours.

The study, co-chaired by Dukakis and by Connecticut Gov. William O'Neill, will also examine possible track improvements for Pittsburgh-Philadelphia, Buffalo-New York, Atlantic City-Phila. (where trackwork is well under-way, NARP News, Oct.-Nov. '85), the "Inland Route" (Boston-Hartford-New York) and New York-Washington.

A Massachusetts position paper states: "Our present sys-



—Mike Peters/Dayton Daily News

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

AMTRAK FARES ON SALE FOR TRAVEL THROUGH JUNE 30, 1987:

● **All Aboard America Fares:** \$150 for round-trip travel within 1 region, \$200 within 2 regions, \$250 within all 3 [previously \$159/239/299]. 3 stops permitted; no black-out (prohibition) periods; regions are East, Central, West.

● **\$7 Return Fare:** when one-way fare is \$60 or more (generally), round-trip only costs \$7 more. 1 stop permitted; blacked-out Nov. 25-30, Dec. 17-Jan. 4; not valid to Canadian points on Chicago-Toronto "International" and New York-Toronto "Maple Leaf."

Both fare plans permit 45 days' travel, sleeping car travel, half-price for children 2-11, and are valid on all trains but Metroliners and Auto Train.

AMTRAK FARE ON SALE FOR TRAVEL THROUGH DEC. 16, 1986:

● **Central & West All Aboard Coach Fare:** \$129 for round-trip coach travel within either Central or West region. 45 days' travel, and half-price for children, but not valid in East or in sleepers, and only 1 stop permitted. [Amtrak does not count next-train-out transfers as "stops."]

(continued on page 4)

U.S. DOT: ARE YOUR PRIORITIES SHOWING?

● Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole has yet to submit to Congress the legally mandated "updated comprehensive report" on the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project. Under Sec. 703(1) (E) of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976, as amended, this report was due Feb. 5, 1985 ("within 9 years after" enactment of the 4R Act) and is now over 19 months late. (Evidently a draft exists, since a new Massachusetts position paper refers to "FRA's draft 9 year study.")

Possibly the Secretary was "put off" by the law's requirement that the 9-year report include—if further NEC intercity passenger transport improvements are found necessary—recommendations for further Northeast rail improvements if such improvements "would return the most public benefits for the public costs involved."

● Secy. Dole speaks proudly about the high level of federal highway spending.

● Federal Aviation Administrator Donald Engen talks as if "the" air crisis solution is more airports. On "This Week with David Brinkley" (ABC-TV) Aug. 31, Engen stated: "The answer is to provide more airports. What is really stymying the system today is the lack of concrete on which to land . . . We need local communities to generate the desire for new airports, and we'll build them."

As Engen's reference to "generating desire" suggests, however, Americans do not desire more airports. *Time* noted that the last major U.S. airport, Dallas/Ft. Worth, was built in 1974. As the Massachusetts paper says, "There was a time when ever increasing airside capacity was an assumption. That time is past. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey spent years looking for a suitable location for a '4th jetport.' Today a 4th jetport is not even under active consideration."

If new airports could be built, would they solve the problem? In the wake of the Aug. 31 mid-air collision in Cerritos, CA, *The Washington Post* reported Sep. 3 that, "within a 90-mile radius of downtown Los Angeles, there are 10 major airports with towers and 20 other airports that carry significant general aviation traffic." This and Sen. Exon's comments (separate box) raise serious doubts that more airports are "the" way to handle steadily increasing demand for intercity travel.

tem of transportation in the northern portion of the Northeast Corridor (NEC) is extremely fragile, and subject to sudden and paralyzing disruption: we can document how it will worsen over time if we do not take action now. The present system . . . can be disrupted by a foggy rain shower at LaGuardia [Airport in NY], or a dusting of snow at [Washington] National Airport: every experienced traveler in the Corridor understands this and must plan for the worst. With all the hoped-for technological promise, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has concluded that 60-70% of air traffic delay is due to weather, and may be unavoidable" ("Position Paper of the Commonwealth of Mass. Concerning Inter-city Transportation in the NEC," prepared by Undersecretary of Transportation Matthew A. Coogan, July 1986).

In California, an 8th daily Los Angeles-San Diego round-



—Photo by Bill Greene/Boston Globe

Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis (right) advocates further rail passenger improvements as a solution to region's massive air congestion woes. He spoke at Boston South Station July 28 before boarding an Amtrak train to Rye, NY—site of a northeastern governors' meeting.

trip (RT) is expected next year (*NARP News*, Sep. '86) and a study mandated by the California Legislature (*Mar. News*, p. 4) is looking at 9th and 10th RT's plus commuter service (2 RT's each, Oceanside-San Diego and either San Clemente or San Juan Capistrano-Los Angeles). There is a growing recognition that the railroad and not Interstate 5 must provide the major needed increases in this corridor's passenger transportation capacity.

Basis for Investment: More generally, there is growing evidence that "congestion relief" has become the major justification for U.S. passenger train investments—just as it was the major argument advanced last year, even by rural-state senators, against President Reagan's kill-Amtrak proposal.

When Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole appeared before the Senate Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee on Feb. 21, 1985, Chairman Mark Andrews (R-ND) began consideration of Amtrak by probing the impact of an Amtrak shutdown on NEC air services. Similarly, Amtrak's relevance to airborne gridlock was much on the mind of Sen. J. James Exon (D-NE) when he questioned NARP's Ross Capon at a Senate Commerce Subcommittee hearing Apr. 29, 1985 (see box).

Of necessity, political leaders respond best to widely

MASSACHUSETTS ON THE "OTHER MODES" THE "AIR VS RAIL" DEBATE SHOULD STOP. We

have no choice but to develop a balanced high speed inter-city program for the Northeast Corridor, with major capacity contributions from both air and rail services. In Germany, the national airline, Lufthansa, actually operates high-speed rail service from its Frankfurt Airport base. In Switzerland, Swiss Federal Railroad personnel are trained to check-in air passengers at every city rail station for all flights out of Switzerland. Throughout Europe high speed inter-city rail is seen as an essential, complementary service to longer distance air service. . . .

HIGHWAYS AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR HIGH SPEED TRAVEL. The discussion of the use of highways to provide for a major increase in high speed travel capacity in the Northeast Corridor should be mercifully short. The lack of available excess highway capacity for this purpose should be obvious to all. . . .

—Mass. Under-Secy. of Transp. Matthew A. Coogan, in July 1986 "Position Paper" (see text)

CONGESTION: A VIEW FROM NEBRASKA

"I appreciated your testimony very much this morning. I have just 2 questions. First, with regard to clogged airports, I am the ranking minority member on the Aviation Subcommittee. A major concern that we have right now is the ultimate safety of not only clogged airports, but clogged airways above and around those major airports.

"And certainly, given what we know is going to be the further increase in the use of air travel—it is the modern means of transportation, I think we all agree—if you place on top of that the closing down of Amtrak, that clogged situation could become an impossible situation in most airports.

"Now, I talk about Nebraska a great deal because that is my major interest. But other than Omaha, we do not have any real danger of clogged airports. I am talking about the Nation as a whole. I think we should keep in mind not only that we are talking about the clogged airports from the standpoint of moving people . . . , but also from a safety standpoint.

"The real danger is the ever-pressing concern that we have for air safety. I think that that fits into the picture that you were painting."

—Sen. J. James Exon (D-NE), responding to NARP testimony at an Apr. 29, 1985, Senate Commerce Subcommittee hearing

perceived "threshold-of-pain" problems. Thus, increased air and highway congestion, its negative impact on regional economies, and the example of Amtrak's success in penetrating the NY-Washington city-pair market (thereby reducing air congestion) are factors which at long last may push U.S. policymakers to develop the rail alternative elsewhere. We emphasize "may" because the mode-specific handling of "user taxes" has created a system oriented towards investment solely in the dominant air and road modes. The FAA has money to spend on new airports but no "community desire" for them (except, perhaps, in Denver).

As a result, leadership cannot be expected from the

NEW MARYLAND RAIL CARS



—Photo by Maryland Dept. of Transportation

Maryland Commuter Rail (MARC) received 15 new commuter rail cars from Nippon-Sharyo late last year, and is running them on its Washington-Baltimore and Washington-Martinsburg, WV, trains. Five cars are restroom- and cab-control-equipped (the latter for push-pull operation). This fall, MARC will receive four AEM7 electric locomotives for Washington-Baltimore (via Bowie) trains. The cars cost \$13.5 million, the AEM7s \$13.6 million. Ridership is climbing: daily passenger trips in June 1986 were 6826, versus 5987 in June 1985. 13 additional coaches are due in 1987.

Administration (see box), but must come from enlightened federal legislators and from state and local political and business leaders, who need support, information, and encouragement from people such as yourself!

For NARP, a key goal is to harness the West- and East-Coast forces for the benefit of services elsewhere in the U.S. Besides the corridors previously mentioned, corridors previously studied by DOT and Amtrak include 6 in the Midwest, the "Texas Triangle," Miami-Jacksonville, Seattle-Portland, Los Angeles-Las Vegas, San Jose-Reno, Washington-Richmond, and Nashville-Atlanta-Savannah. Although intercity highway and air congestion in these corridors may not be as severe, demand for intercity travel is growing. We can make a strong case to business and political leaders that their regions could benefit from the Massachusetts experience and get started on rail improvements *before* rather than after air and road congestion becomes severe enough to threaten economic growth.

What is Congestion? The Mass. paper says airport congestion is so bad that a Federal Aviation Administration 1986 study concluded "at a few of the most active and congested airports—Washington's National, New York's LaGuardia and NY's Kennedy—only modest growth, or even a *slight decline in operations* is projected, because these airports already are used intensively and cannot accommodate large increases in traffic levels given current facilities and technologies." Indeed, Federal Aviation Administrator Donald Engen suggested only July 2 that Flight restrictions may be extended within the next 5 years to Boston, Denver, St. Louis, Los Angeles, and Austin.

Massachusetts says air deregulation has worsened congestion by encouraging airlines to buy smaller planes "to maintain the necessary flight frequencies to multiple points. The . . . trend has been clearly reflected in airline fleet purchase decisions which are increasingly biased toward having fewer seats . . . The passenger load per flight leaving [Boston] is now less than it was 5 years ago."

As for highways, "in Boston, our Interstate Highway System funnels its patrons onto a short stretch of road that

TRANSIT UPDATE

Fortunately for the nation's 8.4 billion transit riders, the anti-transit Symms amendment (NARP News, Sep., p. 4) was not even brought up before the Senate passed its highway/transit reauthorization bill, S. 2405, 99-0 Sep. 24. Senators from states with strong transit ridership, led by Sens. Dixon (D-IL), Lautenberg (D-NJ), D'Amato (R-NY), and Heinz (R-PA), threatened to hold up the entire highway bill if the Symms amendment was brought up. NARP's letter to Senate members said "this amendment would undermine the future of transit in this country, allowing transit's already inadequate funding (transit spending has already dropped by 24% since 1981) to be used for highways."

S. 2405 freezes transit funding at current levels through 1990. S. 2543 by D'Amato and Heinz provided for a funding increase but was never considered either in committee or on the Senate floor.

The House transit bill provides annual increases in transit funding, which NARP supports. House Public Works Chairman James Howard (D-NJ) announced Sep. 26, however, that—to protest a Senate provision allowing a 65 mph speed limit on rural Interstates—he was not going to conference. He will accept 65 mph only with House-proposed safety provisions.

experiences level of Service E [2nd worst of 6 categories; close to 'parking-lot' conditions] or worse from 6 AM to 8 PM. This is true today, and shows no signs of getting any better. This piece of Interstate Highway has a daily traffic volume which is 20 times its practical hourly capacity,— [highways are normally expected to carry only 10 times their normal peak hour capacity]. . . . the experience along our Interstate 93 can be used by other cities to forecast what will be happening—sooner or later—throughout the Corridor."

"Without a well thought out strategy for improving the region's transportation system," says the Mass. report, "the new turnaround in our economy may prove short lived. The region's economy may choke itself, strangled by an inadequate transportation system. Major corporations and businesses may look for new homes elsewhere." All the more reason for places "elsewhere" to act now to get passenger trains fast enough to attract business travelers! Such action—what the Mass. report calls "a balance of resources"—would assure the regions that act of adequate transportation.

The Federal Role? In the present political climate, the 100% federal funding which Gov. Dukakis seeks seems out of the question. (Mass. estimates \$600 million would buy a 3:09 Boston-NY trip time including New Haven-Boston electrification.) On the other hand, it seems unrealistic to expect serious rail passenger improvements *without* federal support (and while the federal government continues to invest almost \$20 billion/year in non-rail transportation).

A joint effort by several states from around the nation could eventually produce an authorization for joint federal-state funding with the federal share at somewhere between 50 and 80%. The sooner the effort begins on this, the sooner our fast trains will begin service! ■

NARP'S 1986-87 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Unless shown below, each director's address is as it appeared in the ballot mailed in December 1985.

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REGION 11: Arizona, New Mexico, El Paso (1 Director). Charles Mon tooth, Scottsdale, AZ.

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STATE ASSOCIATIONS

(The complete list of state associations appeared on page 4, September 1985 NARP News. Officer and/or address changes are listed below.)

Alabama ARP, Bill McFarland, Pres., 325 Skyland Blvd. E., Tuscaloosa 35405.

Carolina Assn. for Passenger Trains, NC: Martin Wheeler, Pres., 7140 Markway Dr., Charlotte 28215. **SC:** Capers Bull, 244 Farndale Dr., Lexington 29072.

Delaware Valley ARP, John Pawson, Pres., PO Box 7505, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

Indiana ARP, Nick Noe, Pres., PO Box 19062, Indianapolis 46219.

Michigan ARP, Alan J. Gebauer, Pres., 2305 Hempstead, Auburn Mills 48057. **Missouri-Kansas Rail Passenger Coalition,** Ted Morris, Chair.

Pennsylvania: Keystone ARP, Charles Rompala, Pres., PO Box 283, Carnegie 15106.

Rhode Island ARP, Steven Musen, Pres., 196 Airport Road, Warwick 02884.

UT-CO-ID-NV-WY: Intermountain ARP, Lance Eckhardt, Pres., PO Box 166, McCall, ID 83638.

Wisconsin ARP, John Parkyn, Pres., Pleasant Valley, Stoddard 54658. ■

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY (continued from page 1)

SERVICE NOTES:

Oakland-Bakersfield "San Joaquins" will be up-graded in Oct.: Amfleet I cars give way to Hi-Level Heritage equipment, including a diner-lounge. From 1979 to 1985, while "San Joaquin" frequency rose 100%, ridership rose 230% (from 87,000 to 286,000)!

On Oct. 26, Tampa section of New York-Florida "Silver Star" regains baggage car and checked baggage service, which had been eliminated in 1980. NARP had requested this restoration.

Amtrak eliminated station ticket agents Aug. 31 at Spartanburg, SC, and Glasgow, MT; Sep. 15 at Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry, WV; Sep. 30 at Columbus, WI, Red Wing, MN, St. Cloud, MN, Staples, MN, Hutchinson, KS, Beaumont, TX, Grenada, MS, Wilson, NC, and Yemassee, SC. All lost checked baggage (except the WV stations which didn't offer it). Amtrak replaced contract railroad agents with its own personnel at Devils Lake, ND (July 15), and Charlotte, NC (Aug. 1).

Amtrak-Mayo Clinic connection: limousine service is available between Winona Amtrak station and Rochester, MN (any destination). Advanced reservations required: White Glove Limo. Service (507) 282-7714. :60 ride, \$42.50/1 person, \$65/2 people.