



RAIL PASSENGERS
ASSOCIATION

Moving America's Trains Forward: Answering Your Questions about H.R. 2

Rail Passengers Association

Washington, DC



Today's Webinar

- Update on Amtrak's 3x service proposal
 - Sean Jeans-Gail, Rail Passengers Association
- The Hill answers member questions about H.R. 2
 - Andrea Wohleber, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
- Rail Passengers answers member questions about H.R. 2
 - Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers Association
 - Sean Jeans-Gail, Rail Passengers Association
- A look ahead to next month's webinar



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Update on Amtrak's 3x Service Proposal

Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President of Gov't Affairs and Policy
Rail Passengers Association



FY21 House T-HUD Funding for Passenger Rail



<u>Program</u>	<u>House FY21 THUD Funding Levels (\$M)</u>
Rail - FY21	
Amtrak – Northeast Corridor	750
Amtrak – National Network	1,300
Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements	500
Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair	200
<u>Rail Subtotal</u>	2,755
Economic Recovery Funds - Rail and Transit	
Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements	5,000
Amtrak - National Network	5,000
Amtrak - Northeast Corridor	3,000
FTA Capital Investment Grants	5,000
BUILD Grants	3,000
<u>Economic Recovery Funds Subtotal</u>	<u>26,000</u>



House Offers a Way Forward

Appropriators included service protections for economic recovery funds mirroring language suggested by our Association, stipulating that:

- The funds provided in this bill shall be used by Amtrak to prevent employee furloughs;
- None of the funding in this bill is intended to be used by Amtrak to reduce the frequency of rail service on any long-distance route or State-supported route below frequencies for such routes in fiscal year 2019; and
- As long as the coronavirus national emergency continues, passengers on Amtrak, airlines, and large transit systems are required to wear masks.



Senate M.I.A.

- Senate Appropriations has yet to release its FY21 T-HUD proposal.
- October 1st deadline approaching fast, with coronavirus stimulus bill, campaigns, and August recess still in consideration.

Support our Senate campaign at www.RailPassengers.org/Action



Answering Your Questions

Andrea Wohleber

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials



- **You've written about PRIME grants, but how are they different from money for Amtrak?**



- **Can you explain the language regarding on board dining? What exactly is different if this passes? Will the food get better?**



- **Can you clarify if what's proposed in the INVEST Act will actually succeed in covering ROW purchasing and construction costs for passenger rail, or if it will just result in additional studies? Will we see a reduction in the amount of time it takes to move from initial studies to builds?**



- **What is the most important takeaway for members like me that want to continue supporting this work in DC but don't have a lot of free time with everything going on right now?**



Answering Your Questions

Jim Mathews, President & CEO

& Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President – Gov't Affairs

Rail Passengers Association



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Would you please have someone explain the difference between the INVEST bill (HR 2) and the T-HUD appropriation?

Authorization vs. Appropriation



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Authorization is writing the law

- Surface Transportation Authorization is policy guidance, establishing a framework for what a program should do, where should it be located, etc.
- These bills authorize the federal government to do something, such as run a federally operated national rail system or distribute infrastructure grants to states.
- The authorization bill merely says the government CAN spend the money on this purpose if it so chooses.

Appropriations is cutting the check

- An appropriations bill is required for money to actually be distributed to an agency or program.
- The best designed policy in the world won't do anything if it doesn't have any funding.
- Policy can also be modified through the appropriations process, though appropriators are hesitant to stray too far from "authorizer's intent"

Authorization vs. Appropriation



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Authorizing Act



Authorization vs. Appropriation



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Authorizing Act



Appropriations Act



Authorization vs. Appropriation

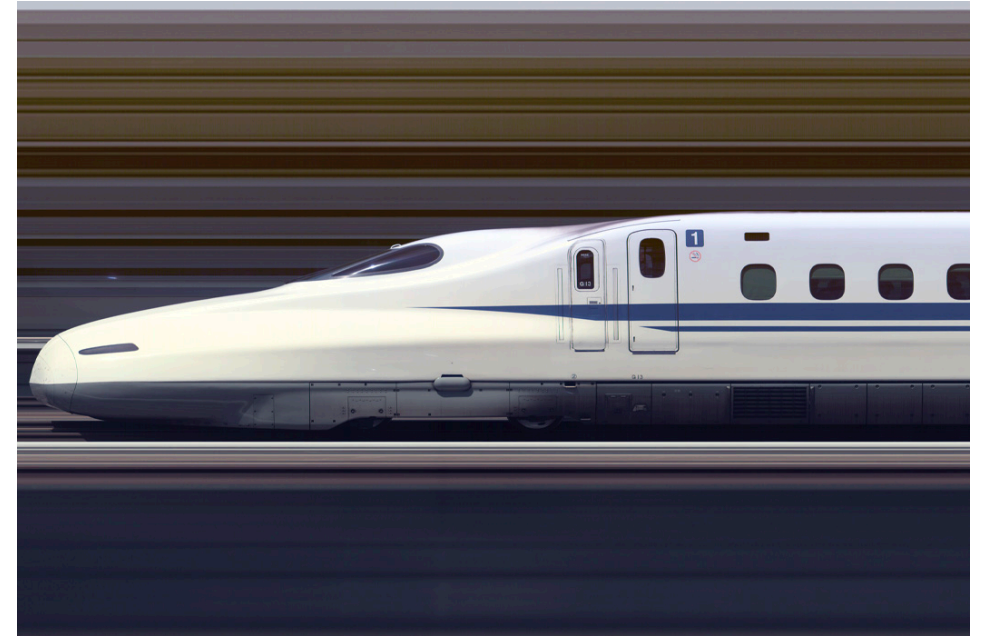


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Authorizing Act



Appropriations Act





What language within the (Authorization) Act has the Association helped write or directly supported?

- Sec. 9201. Amtrak Findings, Mission, and Goals
- Sec. 9202. Amtrak Status
- Sec. 9204. Amtrak Preference Enforcement
- Sec. 9205. Use of Facilities and Providing Services to Amtrak
- Sec. 9206. Prohibition on Mandatory Arbitration
- Sec. 9209. State Supported Routes Operated by Amtrak
- Sec. 9211. Amtrak Food and Beverage
- Sec. 9213. Amtrak Staffing



What do they (Amtrak) need that is within the Act to support a return in ridership and encourage new passengers to support Amtrak?

- H.R. 2 provides \$16.2 billion for National Network grants over 5 years.
 - Will fund new and refurbished equipment, capital improvements to increase speed and reliability on corridors, and new services.
- Sec. 9204. Amtrak Preference Enforcement: provides a means for Amtrak to enforce its statutory right of preference directly in Federal court without intermediaries.



What initiatives are being considered that will help Amtrak management at the regional and national levels to better understand who is the customer?

- Sec. 9220. Amtrak Office of Community Outreach: Requires Amtrak to establish an office to improve engagement with local communities affected by Amtrak operations, with annual reports from Amtrak on specific changes made in response to outreach.
- Sec. 9203. Amtrak Board of Directors: Realigns the makeup of Amtrak's board of directors to better reflect the interests of passengers and Amtrak-served states.
- Sec. 9211. Amtrak Food and Beverage: Establishes a working group, with representation from us, charged with developing recommendations and issuing a report on how to improve onboard food and beverage services.



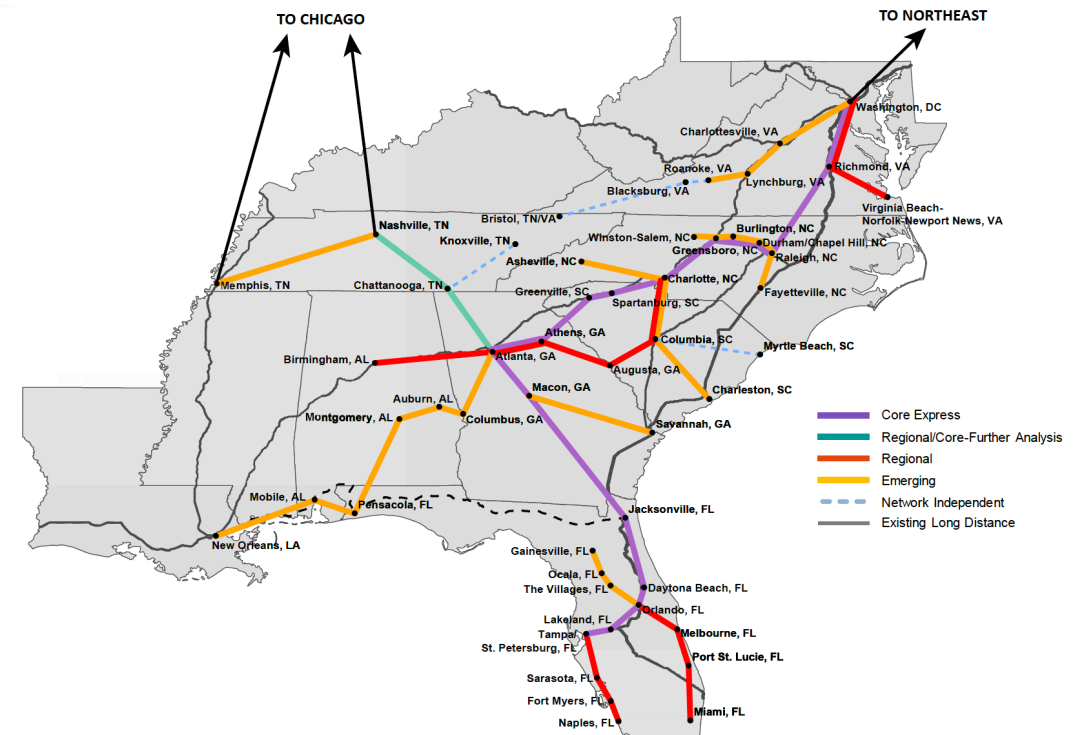
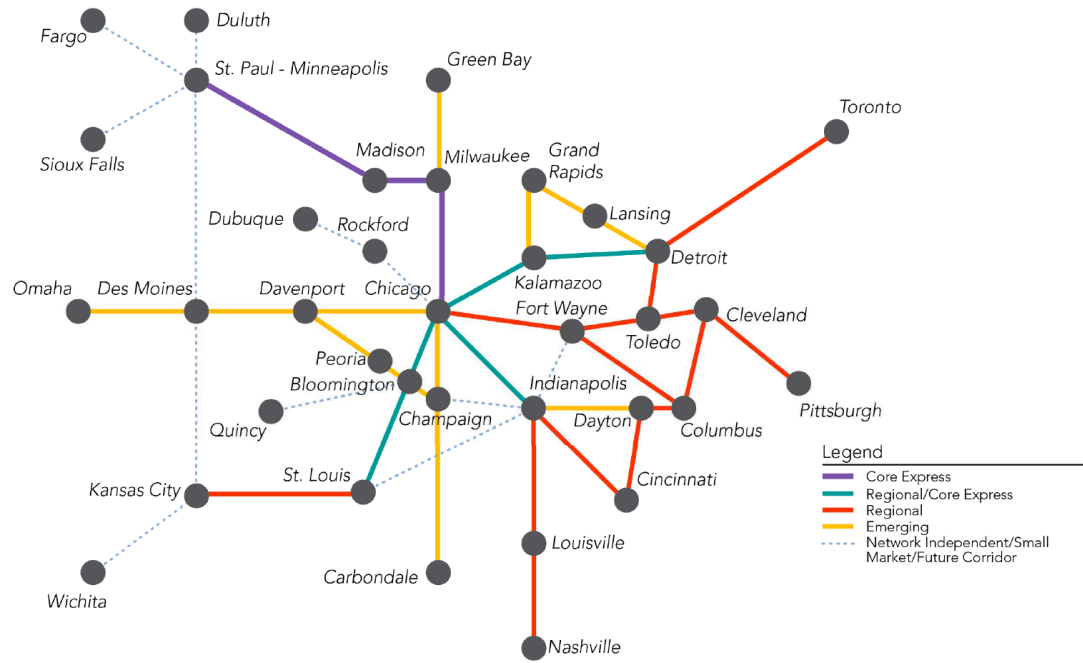
Section 9211 of the Act would amend current law to require that “any individual onboard a train who prepares food and beverages” shall be an Amtrak employee.” The Downeaster is the only Amtrak train in the country where food service is provided by a third-party vendor and not by Amtrak. This has resulted not only in a popular dining experience onboard, but also one which recovers a far larger percentage of its costs (slightly over 85% from July to December 2019) than Amtrak does. Amtrak has the ability to bid, but its costs are always too high. In fact, they are so high that there would be no food service on the train if we were forced to use Amtrak. What is the RPA’s position on this?

- Rail Passengers supports carveouts for certain State-supported services, including on-board food & beverage and station agents.



While the state of our rail passenger system is in need of major investment to bring it up the international standards, what needs to happen to start pushing for a high-speed rail link between New York and Chicago to eliminate the quarterly hour flights between the two cities?

- PRIME Grants: High speed rail projects are eligible for the funds, and priority is given for projects that incorporate regional planning and/or have the support of multiple states.
- Sec. 9205. Use of Facilities and Providing Services to Amtrak: Revises the Surface Transportation Board provisions that govern when Amtrak seeks to operate additional trains over rail lines owned by another carrier.





Since the new Amtrak North River tunnel connects two states, it is definitely an interstate commerce item. Since the Fed is responsible for interstate commerce and not the states, why isn't that argument used to get the Fed to fund construction of the tunnel?

- Short answer: this is precisely what the states of New York and New Jersey are arguing.
 - Portal Bridge has been granted permission by the Federal Transit Administration to enter into final design and engineering (not a FFGA).
- Disagreement between states and Trump Administration centers on status of federal loans, what percentage federal government should pay.
 - Rep. Malinowski amendment to H.R. 2 resolves loan question.



What is the most important takeaway for members like me that want to continue supporting this work in DC but don't have a lot of free time with everything going on right now?

- Simple actions: www.RailPassengers.org/Action
- Donate: www.RailPassengers.org/Donate

Thank You!

Next month's webinar:

Exploring the Daily Sunset Campaign

August 19th

3pm Eastern / 2pm Central

