

News from the

National Association of Railroad Passengers

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Clinton's FY '94 Budget...

Senate Votes 61-38 in Support of Amtrak

During consideration of Pres. Clinton's FY '93 "stimulus" package, a filibuster-proof majority of 61—including seven Republicans—voted down a surprise amendment by John C. Danforth (R-MO) to delete the \$188 mill. for Amtrak. The seven Republicans: Chafee (RI), Coats and Lugar (IN), Cohen (ME), Kassebaum (KS) and Roth (DE). Bond (R-MO) was the only senator not voting.

Three Democrats—Heflin and Shelby (AL) and Boren (OK)—voted against Amtrak. Ironically, the Alabama Democrats cast their votes on the day the "Sunset Ltd." inaugural special (p. 3) attracted big crowds during its stop in Mobile.

Pete Domenici (R-NM) spoke in support of Danforth. These Democrats rose to defend Amtrak's money: J. James Exon (NE), Frank Lautenberg (NJ), Robert C. Byrd (WV), Paul Sarbanes (MD) and George Mitchell (ME).

The debate (*Congressional Record*, Mar. 31, pp. S4101-08) was emotional, as reflected in Senate Majority Leader Mitchell's observation that St. Louis lightrail got \$330 million and Danforth "did not object. He probably took credit for it,

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"We are so far behind our competitors in investment in rail passenger service that we look Neanderthal, maybe third world, when compared to other countries around the world. . . . There is no mode of transportation that is unsubsidized. There is no national rail passenger service across the globe that goes unsubsidized. And, Mr. President, we subsidize aviation. I love aviation. I just wish we did not have to subsidize it to the tune of \$2 bill. a year. I wish we did not have to subsidize highways, but we do, to the tune of billions of dollars a year, because it is in the national interest. . . ."

"The ability of Amtrak to be more competitive, to bring the costs down, depends on its ability to modernize and to reduce its need for a Federal operating subsidy. . . . The job figure used by [Sen. Danforth, \$122,000 per individual for equipment overhauls] is off the mark. The cost figures for rehiring furloughed workers include the cost of all of the material necessary for the capital program. . . ."

—Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) during Mar. 31 debate

...Freezes Amtrak, Boosts Transit \$800 Mill., Highways \$2.5 Bill.

The Clinton Administration's FY '94 Department of Transportation budget is the first budget we can remember that proposed to fund intercity rail passenger service at year-earlier levels. Also, Pres. Clinton seeks \$140 mill. for high-speed ground transportation with DOT Sec. Federico Peña strongly hinting much of it will help Amtrak routes; this is the first installment of the five-year \$1.3 billion program Clinton announced earlier (Mar. News.)

He would increase transit 21% over 1993 levels (not counting the pending economic stimulus package)—the biggest percentage increase for any mode (see box), but only highways—for which spending rises \$2.5 bill.—would be "fully funded" at ISTEAs-authorized levels. Transit appears to be at 90% of ISTEAs (\$4.6 bill. vs. \$5.1 bill.).

The administration appears to be moving toward spending the high-speed money on practical improvements to existing

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President Clinton's FY '94 Transportation Budget Request Compared With Current Appropriations (\$ millions)

Administration	FY '94 Proposed	FY 93' Enacted	Change	FY '93 Proposed	Change
Federal Transit	\$ 4,602	\$ 3,800	+21%	<i>\$4,552</i>	<i>+1%</i>
Federal Highway	20,590	18,095	+14%	<i>21,071</i>	<i>-2%</i>
Nat'l Highway					
Traffic Safety	307	270	+14%	<i>270</i>	<i>+14%</i>
Federal Railroad	1,056	950	+11%	<i>1,138</i>	<i>-8%</i>
Office of the					
Secretary	263	239	+10%	<i>239</i>	<i>+10%</i>
U.S. Coast Guard	3,730	3,585	+4%	<i>3,585</i>	<i>+4%</i>
Federal Aviation	9,229	8,918	+3%	<i>9,168</i>	<i>+1%</i>
(Amtrak & NE Corr. Impr.)	837	846	-1%	<i>1,034</i>	<i>-19%</i>
Maritime	380	564	-33%	<i>564</i>	<i>-33%</i>

NOTES—The last two columns (in italics) assume passage of entire economic stimulus package. Both "Change" columns are comparisons with the proposed FY '94 budget. "Amtrak and Northeast Corridor" is in parentheses because these numbers are also included in the Federal Railroad Administration line.

Senate Support *continued from page 1*

and probably deserved it. . . . I will just close by saying, when St. Louis comes into the next link on this line, I think it should be subjected to very careful scrutiny, the same scrutiny that should apply to all projects."

"Mr. President, since the St. Louis Metrolink transit project first began, the total funding to date—and that is over a period, I am advised, of about 7 years—the total funding to date is \$327.6 million. Come on. Come on. How about a little funding for Amtrak?"

—Senate Appropriations Chairman Robert Byrd (D-WV)
during debate over the Danforth amendment

Sarbanes spoke briefly and angrily: "The European Community has committed itself to spending \$30 billion to upgrade the rail system in Europe. . . . I just want to make the point that someone, somewhere in this world, perceives the advantage of a first-class rail system. . . . When are we going to wake up in this country and meet this kind of competition that they are imposing on us."

Amtrak's plans for the \$188 mill. included:

- improvements worth \$100,000 or more to 60 stations in 27 states nationwide (nine stations in California; six in Florida; five in Virginia);
- smaller amounts of work from a list of 250 candidate stations;
- equipment overhauls at Beech Grove, IN and in Delaware;
- expansion of Amtrak's locomotive order at General Electric's Erie, PA, plant; and
- track and right-of-way improvements (including for yard and service facilities in CA, DC, IN, PA, FL, VA; concrete ties and welded rail for the NEC)

If the \$188 million is *not* passed, Amtrak expects by mid-July to have furloughed 341 more Beech Grove workers and 136 in Delaware (Wilmington and Bear). Appropriations report language limits heavy overhauls to \$35 million but Amtrak has planned to spend \$56 mill.

Pres. Clinton on Apr. 16 offered to reduce the size of his-stimulus package. Unfortunately, he offered no cuts in highways but did offer to cut transit and Amtrak.

(Send NARP a s.a.s.e. for a copy of Amtrak's two-page list of stimulus projects.) ■

CLINTON OFFERS TO CUT AMTRAK IN STIMULUS; "STEALTH" HIGHWAY SPENDING UNSCATHED

Pres. Clinton's Apr. 16 compromise stimulus offer maintained his full \$3 billion highway proposal but cut Amtrak, transit and airport spending 44%, putting Amtrak at \$105 mill.; transit at \$420 mill.

Highway spending enjoys bipartisan popularity among politicians at all levels of government. Highways also enjoyed a special status in stimulus reporting. For weeks, the media called the original \$19.6 bill. package a \$16.3 billion package. The difference is \$3.3 bill. in trust fund spending—including \$3.0 bill. for roads from the Highway Trust fund.

The fact that highway spending comes from a trust fund means it is "paid for" even though it obviously adds to the deficit. This helps explain the advantages to a program when it is "trust funded." It also helps explain why people from the appropriations committees and Office of Management and Budget dislike trust funds—every additional program that gets one makes total spending harder to control.

In any event, highway spending was the only transportation part of the package to which Republicans did not object and which Clinton did not offer to cut in his Apr. 16 compromise (even though airports and part of transit are also "trust-funded").

Pro-environment rhetoric is "politically correct" but it is still tough to get distribution of funds to reflect those priorities.

CLINTON'S DOT NOMINATIONS TO DATE

Deputy Sec. of Transportation—Mortimer L. Downey III, exec. dir. of New York's Metropolitan Transit Auth., which he has served since 1981; he was asst. sec. of transp. for budget and programs under Pres. Carter;

Federal Railroad Administrator—Jolene Molitoris, former long-time Ohio state rail official (not yet formally nominated);

Federal Highway Administrator—Rodney Slater, a veteran Clinton adviser.

DOT general counsel—Stephen Kaplan, former Denver city attorney, a long-time Peña associate; and

Head of the Office of Intermodalism (and an assoc. DOT sec.)—Michael Huerta, dir. of the Port of San Francisco. ■

NORTH CAROLINA CARS DELIVERED

North Carolina DOT took delivery of four refurbished coaches Feb. 24, to be used on the "Piedmont," a new Raleigh-Charlotte 403(b) service. The work was done at Delaware Car Co. in Wilmington, and a fifth coach will be done when funds are available. The cars seat 66 (plus eight non-revenue booth seats) in a beautiful interior, ride smoothly, and have retention toilets. They were part of the last set of conventional intercity cars built by Pullman, for the Kansas City Southern in 1965. They changed hands over time; the state bought them in 1991 for \$42,000 each—or an average total of \$620,000 per car counting rebuilding and shipping. The exteriors are painted to match Amtrak Heritage cars, but a state flag replaces the Amtrak logo. In 1992, two remanufactured locomotives were purchased. There have been delays in setting up wye tracks in Raleigh and Charlotte; that work may be done in September. The state is considering a push-pull or pull-pull operation to start in mid-summer.

—photo by Charles J. Engelhardt, P.E.



TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

More on Amtrak's May 2 Timetable

Amtrak's Chicago-Miami through coach, switched between the "Capitol Ltd." and "Silver Star" at Washington, will be dropped, mainly because the northbound "Star" is so late so often, causing delays to the "Capitol" when it is held and many Richmond-Pittsburgh bus trips on other days.

China service was expanded to the "Lake Shore Ltd.," "Crescent" and "Sunset Ltd." in mid-Feb. These routes were selected because they minimized the need for new watering facilities associated with on-train dishwashers. At the same time, Amtrak introduced a new dining car china pattern—white with a special Amtrak design (tuscan red/silver accent band with portion of Amtrak arrow each fourth of the way around). ("Sunset" got the old pattern.)

The expanded weekend "Tidewater" gets a new stop—the Pottery Factory, a big day-trip/shopping destination adjacent to the CSX tracks just north of Williamsburg on US 60. Club service will be restored to trains 94-95 (not reflected in printed timetables).

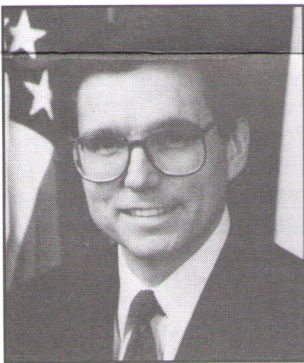
Correction to National Tt: "Capitol" #722 runs seven days a week (6:35a from San Jose); weekend #720 (7:35a) will not run.

The "System Train Timetables" folder will not be published; those needing all that information will need both the "National" and "Northeast" timetables.

Transit/Commuter

Maryland MTA opened a 2.7-mi. extension to the south end of the Baltimore light rail system, Patapsco Ave.-Linthicum, on Apr. 2.

Peña Pushed Denver Airport; Says It May be U.S.'s Last



Federico F. Peña—the former Denver mayor sworn in as the 12th Secretary of Transportation on Jan. 21, 1993—already has been referenced and quoted approvingly in these pages (Jan. and Feb.).

Most significant—for someone previously known to the nation primarily for "gaining approval for construction of one of the largest airports in the world"—Secretary Peña, as reported in the Feb. 20 *Washington Post*, believes Denver International Airport happened "because we were lucky. We happened to have a large parcel of farmland next to the city that was undeveloped, uncontaminated, that we could use for a new airport. . . .

"I think Chicago is beginning to have a conversation about a new airport, and maybe some day they'll have land assembled and ready for a new airport. But it's not going to happen, I don't think, anywhere in America. It's very, very difficult to build an airport. Do you always have to build a new

SUNSET INAUGURAL

Amtrak's all-daylight special inaugurating "Sunset Ltd.'s" extension from New Orleans to Florida (Mar. *News*) brought out big, enthusiastic crowds, especially at new stops,



such as on Apr. 1 at Crestview, FL. (The spotlight Apr. 2 on the terrible condition of the Winter Haven station may provoke corrective action.) Shown on board the special are, from left, NARP Member and Tallahassee City manager Dan Kle-

man, his wife Pat, and Tallahassee Democrat Reporter Andy Lindstrom. At Tallahassee, Gov. Lawton Chiles—noting he was told when he first went to the U.S. Senate that bringing Amtrak service to the Florida Panhandle would make him popular—said: "It took me 23 years,



but here it is!" Also in Tallahassee, Disney characters who made the trip posed on the train's rear platform. The Florida Coalition of Rail passengers owns The "Sunset Ltd." drum-head.

—photos by Ross Capon

runway to move people between city X and city Y? Can you use high-speed rail? . . .

"Most studies indicate that rail requires some kind of government involvement. My answer to that is, if it's a matter of public policy that we want to ensure that people can move efficiently, then there is a role for it. We do it today. We do it with Amtrak."

He favors expanding air capacity with traffic control improvements and—where other people-moving options are not practical—by expanding existing airports.

He rode the X-2000 on a Baltimore roundtrip with outgoing Secretary Card in Jan.

Before his election as mayor, Peña served for four years in the Colorado House of Representatives, becoming Minority Leader in his second term.

He was born in Laredo, TX, in 1947, "graduated from the University of Austin in 1968 and earned his law degree there in 1972. He is married to attorney and world-class marathoner Ellen Hart. They have two children." (Quotations from DOT's biographical release unless otherwise noted.) ■

services. At the Apr. 8 budget news conference, DOT Secretary Federico Peña said he wants to "insure we have a product. I am not about to spend billions of dollars without getting a product. I want to see a system operating hopefully in a very short period of time."

Amtrak...

...would be frozen at current levels minus \$9 mill. (this simply reflects a reduction in excess mandatory retirement and unemployment payments), \$50 mill. and \$131 mill. short of the authorized levels for operating and capital grants. Rep.

Amtrak Under Clinton, Bush, Congress				
	FY '93 BUSH	FY '93 ENACTED	FY '94 CLINTON	FY '94 AUTH.
Core operations	\$269.0	\$331.0	\$331.0	\$ 381.0
Core capital	74.0	165.0	165.0	250.0
New 403(b)				
Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5
Northeast				
Corridor	0.0	204.1	204.1	250.0
Mandatory payments*	0.0	146.0	137.0	150.0
Total	\$343.0	\$846.1	\$837.1	\$1,040.5

*Both Bush and Clinton budgets lump mandatory payments (i.e., federal railroad retirement and unemployment liabilities in excess of Amtrak's demands on those systems) into core operations. However, the Clinton budget gives an estimate for them, reflected above. The authorization figure assumes \$150 million; the law says "such sums as may be necessary."

Bob Carr (D-MI) has commented on the near-universal adoption by state and local officials of the "full-fund ISTEAs" mantra; "full-funding Amtrak" is not mentioned as often.

Yet states in particular should be disappointed at Clinton's failure to fund the authorized \$9.5 mill. for new state-supported Amtrak services. This money would allow states to pay the legal minimum shares of operating costs—45% of short-term avoidable losses the first year, 65% in subsequent years vs. 30% of the higher long-term avoidable losses today.

Moreover, Amtrak's resources are stretched so much that service reliability, customer confidence and employee morale are all suffering badly, as reflected in Amtrak's recent request for a \$58 million FY '93 supplemental appropriation for operations.

While the high-speed money is encouraging, the nation will not be well served if it means improved rail infrastructure but no properly maintained rolling stock.

Key Budget Disappointments

- The apparent rejection of the concept of earmarking for an intercity rail passenger capital improvement trust fund one penny of the 2.5 cents per gallon in gasoline taxes now going to deficit reduction.
- Increases for highways (a big increase!) and aviation contrasted with a freeze for Amtrak.
- Excusing truckers but not freight railroads from the 2.5 cents for deficit reduction (see box below). ■

NARP Promotes Intercity Rail in Environmentalists' Papers

The environmental community—to which the new White House pays far more attention than the old—produced some major policy papers during transition time.

Thanks partly to the general "rail-consciousness-raising" work of NARP's Campaign for New Transportation Priorities over the past seven years and to our specific involvement in the writing of these documents, they included intercity rail passenger needs:

- *A Sustainable Energy Blueprint* (pp. 12-3), a Public Citizen project released in late Dec. with endorsements from about 60 organizations (since grown to 90);
- *Earth Budget: Making Our Tax Dollars Work for the Environment* (pp. 187-8), released Jan. 13 by Friends of the Earth; and
- *An Infrastructure Proposal for Jobs, the Environment and Performance* (pp. 8-11), released Feb. 3 by the "Working Group on Infrastructure" composed of reps from many organizations.

The fact that the Clinton budget—however imperfect—is far better for passenger trains than any recent White House budgets may partly reflect the recognition these documents gave to passenger trains. ■

CLINTON TO FREIGHT RAILROADS: KEEP ON PAYING!

The 1990 budget reconciliation act increased motor vehicle taxes by a nickel a gallon and earmarked 2.5 cents of that for deficit reduction, the balance to the Highway Trust Fund. Thanks to heavy trucker lobbying, the act also instituted a 2.5-cent-a-gallon tax on freight railroads' fuel, with the proceeds going to deficit reduction. The truckers' rationale: if trucks paid a deficit-reduction fuel tax, the railroads should also.

Now, Pres. Clinton's FY '94 budget calls for the railroads to continue this contribution to deficit reduction through Oct. 1, 1999. However, effective Oct. 1, 1995—when the tax otherwise would have expired—payments by trucks and other highway users would be redirected to the Highway Trust Fund to fund highways (one-half penny will go to transit).

When—at DOT's Apr. 9 "interest group" budget briefing—a railroad industry representative asked why the administration did not simply terminate the railroads' tax for reasons of simple equity, the answer was: "it's hard to turn off a tax."

NEW PENN STATION REPORT

As directed by the Amtrak 1993-94 authorization, Amtrak on Apr. 1 sent Congress a report on Amtrak's plan to move its intercity station from the present Penn Station below Madison Square Garden to the James A. Farley Post Office Building across Eighth Ave. (Aug. '92 News.). The cost estimate of the four-year project is now \$315 million. To order a copy of the report, write to Amtrak Public Affairs; 60 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.; Washington, DC 20002.