

News from the

National Association of Railroad Passengers

July 1994

7
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Strong Pro-Amtrak House Vote; Funding Bills Moving Quickly

Appropriations and authorization bills are on the move. The House on June 16 passed the fiscal year 1995 transportation appropriations bill, HR 4556, after solidly defeating, 326-103, yet another anti-passenger-rail amendment by Joel Hefley (R-CO, Oct. '93 *News*). Only Hefley rose in support of his amendment to cut all Amtrak accounts by 10%. Carr (D-MI), Foglietta (D-PA), Swift (D-WA) and Dingell (D-MI) spoke against it; Oxley (R-OH) and Bentley (R-MD) put pro-Amtrak statements in the record. Hefley said Amtrak should be privatized, quoting a September 24 *Washington Post* business-section commentary piece (which earlier was refuted by NARP and others for its gross inaccuracies).

HR 4556 had been approved by the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Bob Carr, on May 25. The full committee, chaired by Dave Obey (D-WI), approved it June 9. To Carr's credit, compared with recent previous bills from

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the fiscal year 1995 DOT appropriations bills and two-year Amtrak authorization bills, see chart on page 4.

this committee, HR 4556 is a much more Amtrak-friendly bill. Nevertheless, it would:

- not provide adequate funds for Amtrak operations.
- drive up the cost of the high-speed train-sets (by not providing more funds for them and thus delaying the process; Amtrak wants to order them within the next several months).
- not provide more funds for Boston electrification, construction of which should start during the fiscal year.
- direct the Federal Railroad Administration to spend \$5 million for Connecticut freight sidings and \$10 million to design and construct a 20-mile third track in Rhode Island for Providence & Worcester Railroad double-stack freight service. This use of high speed rail funds would set a costly precedent because double-stack does not now run on this route and the third track's total cost exceeds \$100 million.
- not fund the Farley/Penn Station project or the maglev prototype authorized by Section 1036 of ISTEA.

Senate Appropriations is expected to proceed with its version of HR 4556 sometime after July 11.

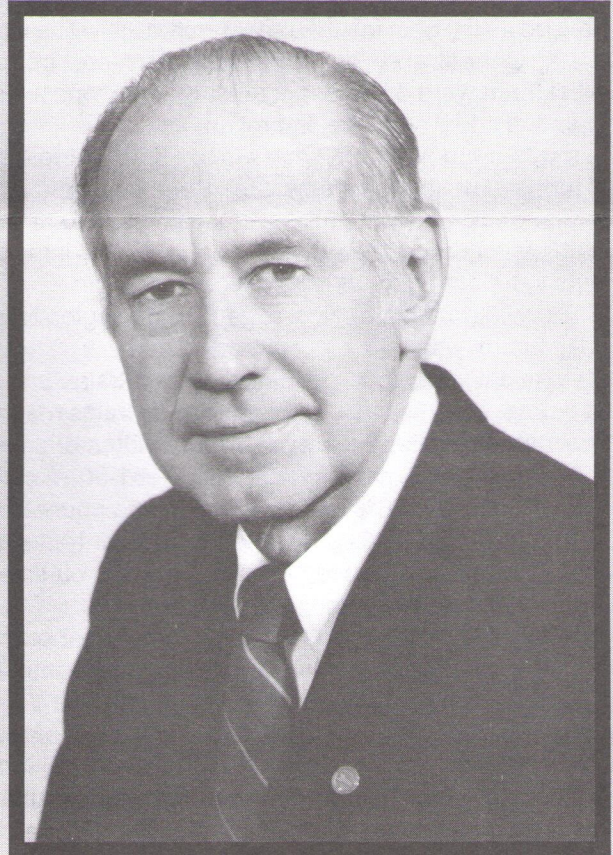
House Amtrak Authorization

The Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Transportation and Hazardous Materials, chaired by Al Swift, on May 24 approved HR 4111 (for fiscal years 1995-96), which would:

- create a Capital and Equipment Acquisition Account, using "payments received for the use of [Amtrak's] equipment

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W. GRAHAM CLAYTOR, JR., 1912-1994



"...Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives ...that the Congress recognizes the critical role of Amtrak in the Nation's transportation system, and that the Nation profoundly thanks W. Graham Claytor Jr. for a lifetime of dedication and superb service to this Nation, for his willingness to assume major new public challenges at a time when his peers had long ago retired, for his ability to profoundly change the course of events, from the lives of the sailors of the U.S.S. Indianapolis to the preservation of national rail passenger service, and for his brilliant stewardship of Amtrak over the past decade."

—Public Law 103-165 (H.J.Res. 294), enacted December 2, 1993, which began with 12 "whereas" clauses detailing Claytor's career. It is unusual for a commemorative resolution to honor a living person and for the President to sign one honoring an individual.

W. Graham Claytor, Jr., Chairman and President of Amtrak from 1982 to 1993, died in Florida on May 14 at the age of 82. He had cancer. His leadership, and the credibility he established for Amtrak on Capitol Hill—particularly among many fiscal conservatives—was crucial in enabling Amtrak to survive repeated White House attempts to underfund or completely defund Amtrak. Under Claytor, passenger-miles

(continued on page 4)

Downs Presses for On-Time Trains

Amtrak President Thomas M. Downs is pressing Amtrak's contracting freight railroads for better on-time performance. Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña backed up Downs' effort in letters to the railroads' CEO's. Late trains were a main topic of the April Amtrak board meeting. Amtrak said 36% of all fiscal year 1993 delays were "attributable to factors...wholly controlled by the freight carriers," as opposed to things like Amtrak equipment failures or floods.

The on-time performance records of the nine largest contracting railroads were detailed at the open board meeting. Canadian Pacific (Soo), Norfolk Southern and Illinois Central were praised as the best for January-March, 1994. The worst were CSX, Conrail and Burlington Northern (see boxes). These last three were doing better in May—one hopes this is more than the usual seasonal improvement.

A train with a run under 250 miles is "on-time" if it reaches its final terminal up to 10 minutes late. Runs up to 350 miles get 15 minutes' "grace"; 450 miles—20 minutes; 550 miles—25 minutes; over 550 miles—30 minutes. Amtrak's incentive payments to freight railroads also encourage on-time performance at key, intermediate cities, except on Burlington Northern and—due to lack of any incentives—Conrail.

Amtrak said it will begin reporting *how late* trains are. In the first quarter of 1994, 46% of long-distance trains reached their destinations on-time (i.e., within 30 minutes of schedule); 13% were 31-60 minutes late; 17%—61-90 minutes; 18%—90-120 minutes; 6% were more than two hours late.

In the same period, 84% of Northeast Corridor trains and 74% of all other short-distance Amtrak trains were on-time or no more than 20 minutes late.

About 97% of Amtrak's 25,000 route-miles—and about half its train-miles and passenger-miles—are on tracks controlled by other railroads. Amtrak owns, leases or controls Washington-New Rochelle, NY, 245 miles; New Haven-Boston, 160 miles; New Haven-Springfield, 62 miles; Philadelphia-Harrisburg, 104 miles; Atlantic City line, 61 miles; around Albany, 46 miles (Empire line) and 12 miles (Boston line); Porter, IN-Kalamazoo, 96 miles (34% of the Chicago-Detroit line); and some terminal-area trackage. ■

BOTTOM THREE RAILROADS

January-March 1994

CSX—46% of all delays attributable to railroad factors (16% of total delays to signals, 19% to slow orders, 11% to freight-train interference).

Worst train—*Silver Star* (northbound Miami section), 22% on-time, 833 minutes' delay per 10,000 train-miles.

Conrail—44% of all delays attributable to railroad factors (12% of total delays to signals, 3% to slow orders, 29% to freight-train interference).

Worst train—*Lake Shore Limited* (eastbound Boston section), 11% on-time, 543 minutes' delay per 10,000 train-miles.

Burlington Northern—48% of all delays attributable to railroad factors (13% of total delays to signals, 14% to slow orders, 21% to freight-train interference)

Worst train—*Empire Builder* (eastbound), 8% on-time, 779 minutes' delay per 10,000 train-miles.

CONTRACTING RAILROAD ON-TIME RECORDS

January-March 1994

Contracting Railroad	Percent of Amtrak Trains On-Time	Delay per 10,000 Train-Miles
CP-Soo	88%	137 min.
Norfolk Southern	83	58
Illinois Central	78	327
Santa Fe	76	189
Union Pacific	72	363
Southern Pacific	66	438
CSX	59	496
Conrail	58	555
Burlington Northern	54	468

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

A Strike on CP-Soo July 14 may affect Chicago-Milwaukee-St. Paul trains—call Amtrak before travel.

Spectacular Amtrak Kids' Fares: Through September 30, children age 2-15 get a great discount on some routes when going with an adult (limit two per adult; not valid with All Aboard America fare). For \$5 one-way, kids may use Northeast Corridor (plus Empire, Keystone, Tidewater, Cape Cod trains). For \$29 one-way, kids may use Carolinas/Florida trains (but not *Sunset*) and *Crescent/Gulf Breeze*. Universal Studios has a separate discount through October 15 for children and adults using trains to Sanford and Orlando.

Oakland-16th St. Station closes July 18. Starting that day, long-distance trains and Thruway buses use Emeryville instead (corridor trains are already there).

Thruway Buses: Michigan—A new line started May 1 connects daily (except Sunday) with Amtrak's *International* to/from Chicago at Flint, serving Saginaw and Bay City...**Illinois**—Peoria (Bus Center) is now connected with Bloomington-Normal (Amtrak) several times daily...**California**—Martinez-Arcata (North Coast) bus now runs twice daily to McKinleyville, Klamath, Crescent City and Brookings, OR. The Hanford-San Luis Obispo bus now runs daily to Pismo Beach and Santa Maria. Pasadena buses now stop at the Hilton Hotel, 150 S. Los Robles Ave. Bus service to Claremont (Metrolink) replaces Pomona (Garey Ave.).

Atlantic City Line: From July 2, Amtrak trains skip Lindenwold, stop at a new station at Cherry Hill, NJ, adjacent to the Garden State Raceway on Rte. 70.

Food Service: The *Desert Wind* (Salt Lake City-Los Angeles) dining car and the *California Zephyr* (Salt Lake-Oakland) lounge car were restored in May.

All-new Metroliner cafe menus were introduced May 2 (new sandwiches, fresh salads, bagels, micro-brewery beers, etc.). Metroclub menus had a complete changeover January 20, and utensil upgrade (new containers, cups, etc.) May 2.

Transit: St. Louis' successful MetroLink light rail line was extended to Lambert Airport (1.5 mi.), June 25 (President Clinton and DOT Secretary Peña rode then). Two weekday Metrolink commuter train round-trips were extended to Oxnard, CA (8 mi.), April 6.

Grade Crossing Deaths Rise in 1993; Danforth, Administration Seek Action with Two Safety Bills

Though declining for two years, highway-rail grade crossing fatalities totalled 626 in 1993, up over 8% from the year before (but still much less than 15 years ago). Also, 523 trespassers were killed last year. On May 18, Sen. John Danforth (R-MO), ranking member of the Senate Commerce Committee, introduced S. 2127, the Railroad Grade Crossing Safety Act of 1994. On June 13, the Administration proposed the Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Act of 1994, at a Capitol Hill press conference.

Both bills would increase funding for Operation Lifesaver, the national grade crossing safety education project. Danforth's bill could be enacted this year; it may be added to a rail safety bill pending before the Senate Commerce Committee. S. 2127, the Danforth bill, would:

- Require the Secretary to establish penalties for crossing violations by commercial trucks—suspend licenses and fine both drivers and truck owners.
- Establish a toll-free number 800 number for the public to report crossing problems to authorities.
- Mandate uniform crossing standards and a plan for crossing elimination.

The Administration's bill would:

- Earmark \$15 million a year of ISTEA Surface Transportation Program funds for section 130 grade crossing improvements "on a corridor basis" (no precise definition of corridor).
- Grant cash incentives to localities for permanent closure of crossings when the railroad involved matches funds.
- Use 100% federal funding for closures. Currently, closures require a 10% non-federal match while crossing improvements may get 100% federal funding.

DOT also released a cross-modal-administration "Rail-Highway Crossing Safety Action Plan." It would:

- Set as a goal the elimination of all 4500 crossings between roads with National Highway System designation and "principal rail lines."
- Consider making violation of automatic crossing warning devices (gates, bells, lights) a "serious offense" for holders of commercial drivers licenses.
- Develop model code language for state legislatures to use to address trespassing and vandalism.

Big Trucks, Crossings and Amtrak

No Amtrak passenger has died at a grade crossing (though four VIA Rail passengers died in 1992 when a truck hit a train in Quebec). These accidents, however, are the most frequent cause of Amtrak derailments and passenger injury and have killed Amtrak employees and caused much damage and delay. Recent notable accidents involving Amtrak (see also Sept. '93, Sept. '92 News):

- **Nov. 30, 1993:** A truck carrying heavy power plant equipment blocks a crossing near Kissimmee, FL and derails Amtrak's *Silver Meteor* (see Jan. News, p. 4).
- **Dec. 21, 1993:** A truck loaded with metal runs through lowered gates and flashing lights at Gary, IN and derails Amtrak's *Broadway Limited*, killing the driver and injuring 39 (see Feb. News, p. 4).
- **Mar. 3, 1994:** Amtrak's *Pioneer* strikes a water tank truck stopped on a crossing at Platteville, CO, derailing the train

and injuring 12 passengers and one crew. Amtrak estimated the damage to the train to be over \$200,000; damage to Union Pacific track was \$10,000.

- **June 6, 1994:** Amtrak's *International* strikes a commercial truck at a private crossing at Comstock, MI (near Kalamazoo) and derails, killing the driver and injuring 12. ■

GETTING THERE...

...(subtitle: *The Epic Struggle Between Road and Rail in the American Century*), by Stephen B. Goddard, is a readable, well-footnoted 351-page book about how the U.S. came to overrely on roads and neglect railroads. It documents early railroad greed that led to years of deadly regulation, shackling railroad and trolley companies, while new roads and unregulated trucks and buses proliferated. Meet Tom McDonald, key "good roads" leader and head of the old federal Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), 1919-53. Long after contrary evidence was clear, he claimed trucks would just feed long-haul trains. By 1947, however, he urged state highway officials to promote mass transit. Also, President Eisenhower, who in 1956 signed the Interstate highway law (with 90% federal funding), *opposed urban super-highways!* In 1959, he saw "a huge earthen gash" in Washington and "recoiled in horror" to hear it was an "Interstate." He then learned BPR and urban congressmen had cut a deal: they would vote for the Interstates if BPR routed "highways to accomplish 'urban renewal,' often a euphemism for removal of the poverty-stricken." Goddard's solutions sound much like NARP's (\$28 from Harper-Collins' BasicBooks division, 800/331-3761).

Funding Legislation

(from page 1)

or facilities" and recovered claims—a step toward a passenger rail trust fund. Use of federal fuel taxes paid by Amtrak would require approval by the Ways and Means Committee.

- set a 1995 operations ceiling \$27 million below Amtrak's "bare-bones" needs and \$48 million below Amtrak's formal request. HR 4111's 1996 figure is \$20 million lower than that.
- shift to other Amtrak accounts the \$90 million requested for the Farley/Penn Station project by President Clinton.
- set state payments for 403(b) trains to at least 45% of first-year (55% of subsequent-year) long-term avoidable losses, a big increase for states now paying lower short-term losses. Congress may consider a one-year freeze in state payment calculation while an independent party studies costs.
- require Amtrak to leave clearance for a third track for double-stack freight service in Rhode Island (see above).
- require the Secretary of Transportation to report on how Amtrak on-time performance compares to other modes.

After July 11, the full Energy and Commerce Committee, chaired by John Dingell, may take up HR 4111. The Senate Commerce Committee may have a counterpart bill then. ■

Graham Claytor

(from page 1)

rose from 4.2 billion to 6.2 billion a year. He was instrumental in upgrading Washington's spectacular Union Station. Its passenger concourse was named for him in January.

Claytor was deeply touched when Congress, during its hectic rush to 1993 adjournment, nevertheless passed the resolution quoted above. (Send NARP s.a.s.e. and \$1 for full text.)

The railroad industry honored Claytor with a big dinner at Washington Union Station on February 9. He spoke at the end of the program. A marvelous video of his life was shown. It included an interview with Union Pacific Chairman Drew Lewis who, as President Reagan's transportation secretary, recommended Democrat Claytor for the Amtrak job. Lewis initially was rebuffed by White House Officials Nofziger, Baker and Meese, but they relented after Lewis challenged them to find someone better qualified to lead Amtrak.

Claytor received NARP's George Falcon Golden Spike

Award in April, 1983. He always took NARP's views seriously. If he strongly disagreed with a letter he received from NARP, he would pick up the phone promptly and say so.

A lifelong collector of model trains and railroadians, he became Southern Railway's law vice president in 1963, president in 1967, and retired in 1977. Claytor graduated from Harvard Law School in 1936, and from 1947 was a partner at Washington law firm Covington & Burling—returning there after retiring from Southern and Amtrak. Claytor served with distinction in the U.S. Navy in World War II. In the Carter Administration, he was navy secretary, acting transportation secretary and deputy defense secretary. (See also "Graham Claytor Steps Up," June '82 News.)

Among those present at Claytor's well attended funeral in Washington May 17 were General Colin Powell and former DOT Secretary Elizabeth Dole. His remains were brought to Washington, and carried to Roanoke for burial, by train.

COMPARING THE FUNDING BILLS

(\$ millions)

Program	Actual Appropriations		1995	1995	1995 Authorization		DOT Appropriations	
	1993	1994	Amtrak Request	Admin. Request	House HR 4111	Senate S.XXXX	House HR 4556	Senate HR 4556
Amtrak: Operating	\$ 351.0	\$ 351.7	\$ 430.0	\$ 380.0	\$ 373.0	\$ —	\$ 376.7	\$ —
403(b)	(1)	(1)	8.0	(1)	17.0	—	(1)	—
Capital	190.0	195.0	337.0	252.0	332.0	—	245.0	—
Mandatory payments (2)	146.0	137.0	150.0	156.0	150.0	—	150.0	—
Northeast Corridor	204.1	225.0	270.0	199.6	(3)	—	165.0	—
Penn Station/Farley	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.0	0.0	—	0.0	—
High Speed Rail	5.0	3.5		32.5	—	—	25.0	—
PASSENGER RAIL TOTAL	896.1	912.2		1,110.1			961.7	—
Federal Highway	18,430.2	19,938.4		20,161.9			19,811.6	—
IVHS (4)	143.0	214.0		289.0			232.8	—
Federal Aviation	8,861.9	8,644.8		8,806.9			8,515.7	—
Federal Transit	3,800.0	4,579.3		4,761.9			4,620.4	—
BILL STATUS					Pending in Committee	Pending in Subcommittee	Passed June 16	Pending in Subcommittee

(1) Included in operations line. HR 4556's report earmarks \$8 million. Amtrak's actual share of long-term 403(b) costs will be \$18 million in 1995.

(2) Excess retirement and unemployment costs paid by the Federal Railroad Administration directly to the Internal Revenue Service.

(3) As needed.

(4) Intelligent Vehicle Highway Systems, included in Federal Highway figure.

APPROPRIATIONS are what agencies actually may spend; AUTHORIZATION is a ceiling which appropriations normally do not exceed.



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