



# Rail Passengers Webinar Series: State Supported Services



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# Today's Webinar

- **Introduction**
  - Joe Aiello, Rail Passengers Field Coordinator
- **Legislative Update & the New Congress**
  - Sean Jeans-Gail, Rail Passengers VP of Government Affairs + Policy
- **State Supported Services Panel**
  - Wayne Davis, TrainRiders/Northeast Chairman
  - Laura Kliewer, Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission Director
  - Deborah Fischer Stout, Northern Flyer Alliance President
- **Q&A**
  - Moderated by Madi Butler, Rail Passengers Communication Manager
  - Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers President & CEO
  - Wayne Davis, Laura Kliewer, Deborah Fischer Stout, and Sean Jeans-Gail
- **A Look Ahead**
  - Joe Aiello



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# Legislative Update & the New Congress

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

Rail Passengers Association





# Transportation in the Spotlight

- Biden Administration hints at February for infrastructure proposal
- Pete Buttigieg received bipartisan endorsement for Secretary of Transportation by Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee today
  - Polly Trottenberg named as Deputy Secretary of USDOT
  - Amit Bose named as Deputy Administrator at FRA



# Timing Coming into Focus

- Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer targeting mid-March for next COVID-19 funding package
  - Schumer declared mass transit stands to win in the next COVID package
  - Hudson River Tunnels also stands to benefit; unclear what vehicle Schumer intends to use for these funds
- Senate Budget Chair Bernie Sanders has signaled intent to use budget reconciliation for pandemic and infrastructure bills
  - Establishes 50 vote threshold
  - Limited to spending



# Restoring Daily Service via COVID-19 Legislation

- We are calling for Amtrak to receive \$1.541 billion in funding in the next round of emergency pandemic funding
  - Includes funding to restore LDR, support State-supported and commuter rail, and bring back employees furloughed due to COVID
- This funding should include clear language stipulating the immediate restoration of service and return of furloughed employees
- We're targeting House and Senate appropriators – with an emphasis on the Senate



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# State Supported Services Panel





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# Wayne Davis

Chairman, TrainRiders/Northeast





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Website: [trainridersne.org](http://trainridersne.org)

Facebook: [facebook.com/TrainRidersNortheast](https://facebook.com/TrainRidersNortheast)



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# Laura Kliewer

Director, Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission



# MIPRC

## Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission



*Working to implement a 21st century passenger rail system by adding the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative network and additional state-supported corridors to the region's existing passenger rail infrastructure.*

# What is MIPRC?

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The purpose of MIPRC, through member states and partners, is to promote, coordinate and support passenger rail service improvements through:

- Development and implementation of plans and improvements for Midwest intercity passenger rail service

- Advocacy for Midwestern interests regarding passenger rail development

- Support of our state Department of Transportations' passenger rail plans

- Leadership in the FRA-led regional rail planning efforts

# Who is MIPRC?

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Originally enacted in 2000, states are members through compact legislation.

▶ **Eight Member States\*:**

- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kansas
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- North Dakota
- Wisconsin

\*Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio & South Dakota are also eligible to join the compact

# The Midwest's current state-supported routes

State Supported Passenger Routes (2020)



Corridor (State-Supported) Service in the Midwest (Pre-COVID)

Route	Frequency
<b>Chicago-St. Louis</b> ( <i>Lincoln service</i> )	4 daily
<b>Kansas City-St. Louis</b> ( <i>Missouri River Runner service</i> )	2 daily
<b>Chicago-Milwaukee</b> ( <i>Hiawatha service</i> )	7 daily
<b>Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac, MI</b> ( <i>Wolverine service</i> )	3 daily
<b>Chicago-Grand Rapids, MI</b> ( <i>Pere Marquette service</i> )	1 daily
<b>Chicago-Port Huron, MI</b> ( <i>Blue Water service</i> )	1 daily
<b>Chicago-Carbondale, IL</b> ( <i>Illini &amp; Saluki services</i> )	2 daily
<b>Chicago-Quincy, IL</b> ( <i>IL Zephyr &amp; Carl Sandburg services</i> )	2 daily

## New equipment on Midwest's state-supported routes

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Equipment is jointly owned by the Midwest States Consortium, led by Illinois

- Comprised of IL, MI, WI & MO

Manufactured by Siemens Corporation in Sacramento CA

- 33 Charger Locomotives – began service starting mid-2017; now on all routes
- 88 Passenger Railcars – began arriving end of 2020

Branded as “Amtrak Midwest”

WI currently in procurement process to add additional cars and cab cars



## Car Enhancements

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Increased ADA enhancements

- Integrated wheelchair lifts
- Fully ADA compliant washrooms
- Allows for freedom of movement for ADA customers between cars

Outlets at seats

USB ports at seats

Onboard information system

Customer wi-fi

Enhanced Food Service areas

Bicycle racks incorporated into cars



# Opportunities for state-supported service

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## Current:

MIPRC states have applied for and **received more than \$300 million** in federal passenger rail grants made available through the FAST Act:

- **CRISI** (4 non-PTC rounds): **\$190.4** million total awarded for 13 projects (every MIPRC state received at least one grant)
- **SOGR** (3 rounds): **\$101.4** million total awarded to three MIPRC states (Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin) for 6 projects
- **R&E** (2 rounds): **\$12.6** million awarded to Minnesota & Wisconsin for 2<sup>nd</sup> frequency between Twin Cities and Chicago

# Opportunities for state-supported service

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## Current:

Several states are in the process of establishing new routes/additional frequencies:

- **Illinois:** Chicago-Moline, IL (with possible future service to Des Moines, IA and Omaha, NE); Chicago-Rockford, IL
- **Minnesota/Wisconsin:** Received two federal grants in 2020 to establish a 2<sup>nd</sup> frequency (in addition to long-distance *Empire Builder*) from Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago
- **Wisconsin:** Additional frequencies on its *Hiawatha* service (Chicago-Milwaukee)

Others are in planning stages, including:

- **Kansas:** Extension of *Heartland Flyer* (Fort Worth, TX-Oklahoma City, OK) to Kansas City via Wichita, KS.
- **Minnesota:** Twin Cities-Duluth
- **Ohio:** Chicago to Columbus, OH via Ft. Wayne, IN

# TIGER/BUILD Grant Results



**MIPRC states have received \$333.6 million over the 12 rounds of TIGER/BUILD funding for passenger rail improvements**



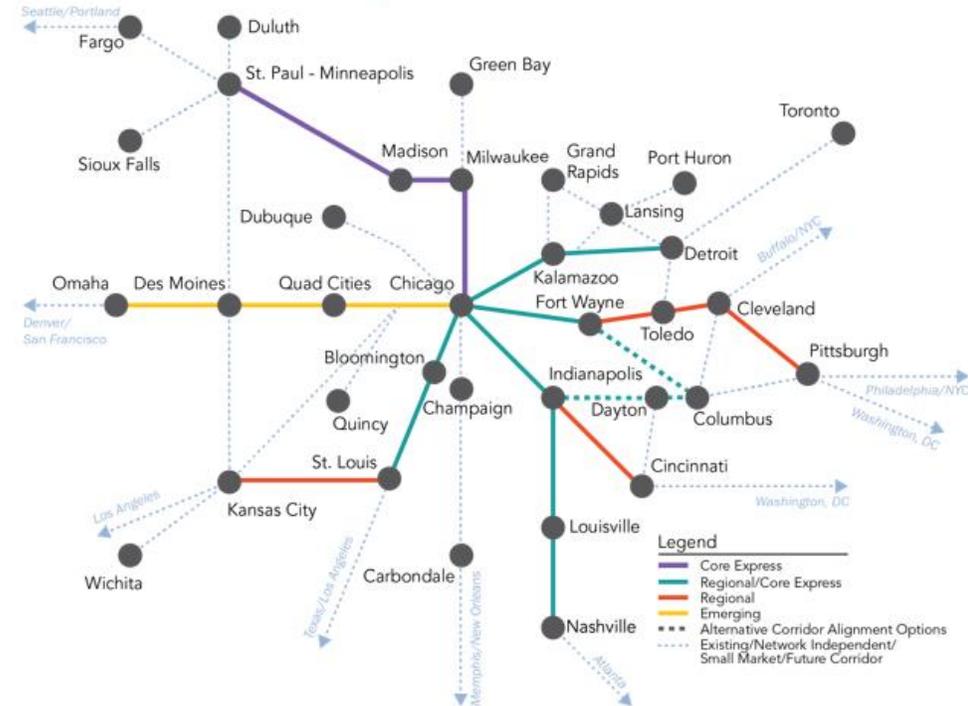
- **Illinois:** CREATE Program projects (Round 1, 2010 & Round 4, 2012); Normal Multimodal Transportation Center (Round 1, 2010); Moline Multimodal Station (Round 2, 2010); Alton Regional Multimodal Station (Round 3, 2011); Springfield Rail Improvements Project (Round 5, 2013 & Round 8, 2016); Southern Illinois Multimodal Station Project (Carbondale) (Round 11, 2019); Underpass Project at Uptown Station (Normal) (Round 11, 2019)
- **Indiana:** Waterloo Station improvements (Round 2, 2010)
- **Kansas:** Southwest Chief Route improvements (Round 6, 2014; Round 7 2015 & Round 9, 2018)
- **Michigan:** Kalamazoo to Dearborn rail improvements (Round 5, 2013)
- **Minnesota:** St. Paul Union Depot Multi-Modal Transit and Transportation Hub (Round 1, 2010)
- **North Dakota:** Devils Lake Rail Improvements (for Empire Builder route) (Round 3, 2011)

# Opportunities for state-supported service

## Future:

- As of the spring of 2020, Midwestern states had a total of more than \$2 billion in passenger rail projects in the scoping and final design/construction stages
- The Midwestern states have partnered with the FRA to develop a 40-year vision for the region's passenger rail service and governance.

Proposed Draft Network, Phase II



# Challenges for state-supported service

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## Current:

- Sustained federal funding for capital projects
- Federal assistance with start-up operations for new and ongoing service is weak
- Amtrak Performance Tracking System (APT) to allocate costs and revenues to service lines needs review to determine whether costs associated with the National Network are inflated.

## Potential:

- The FRA-led Midwest Regional Rail Plan is a “high level” vision; once it is finalized, states will have the responsibility for “carrying out” the vision.
- The National Network depends on the connectivity and service provided by both long-distance and state-supported service.

# The Midwest's long-distance routes

**Amtrak Long-Distance Routes in the Midwest (2020)**



**Long-Distance Routes Serving the Midwest (Pre-COVID)**

Route	Frequency
<i>Cardinal</i> [Illinois; Indiana; Ohio; Kentucky; West Virginia; Virginia; Washington, D.C.; Maryland; Delaware; Pennsylvania; New Jersey; New York]	3 per week
<i>Empire Builder</i> [Illinois; Wisconsin; Minnesota; North Dakota; Montana; Idaho; Washington/ Oregon]	1 daily
<i>Capitol Limited</i> [Illinois; Indiana; Ohio; Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Washington, D.C.]	1 daily
<i>California Zephyr</i> [Illinois; Iowa; Nebraska; Colorado; Utah; Nevada; California]	1 daily
<i>Southwest Chief</i> [Illinois; Iowa; Missouri; Kansas; Colorado; New Mexico; Arizona; California]	1 daily
<i>City of New Orleans</i> [Illinois; Kentucky; Tennessee; Mississippi; Louisiana]	1 daily
<i>Texas Eagle</i> [Illinois; Missouri; Arkansas; Texas (3/week on to New Mexico; Arizona; California)]	1 daily
<i>Lake Shore Limited</i> [Illinois; Indiana; Ohio; Pennsylvania; New York/Massachusetts]	1 daily

# The Problem:

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**Due to COVID, what Amtrak anticipated would be a record ridership year has instead (since March 2020), seen ridership decreases up to 95 percent:**

- Amtrak maintained daily long-distance service throughout FY 2020, while temporarily cutting service on the Northeast Corridor (most states also decided to cut service due to COVID-related ridership losses).
- On June 17, 2020 Amtrak announced that it would cut long-distance service on all but one route from daily to three days per week starting in October.
- The company said the service cuts would remain in effect through federal Fiscal Year 2021, unless market conditions demonstrate increased demand sooner.
- On Sept. 1, Amtrak said it will also furlough 1,950 employees, 698 of whom are on-board staff for long-distance trains.

# Impact of Amtrak Cuts

Midwestern states are already losing money because of the reduction in long-distance passenger rail service, and the region could take a hit of up to \$573.2 million in direct and indirect economic losses if the cutbacks continue for the entire fiscal year.

**Estimated Annual Economic Losses  
Due to Amtrak Reduction of Daily Long-Distance Service to 3x/week  
Midwestern States**

	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa	Kansas	Minnesota	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	Ohio	Wisconsin	Grand Total
Direct Losses:	\$163,431,910	\$7,155,578	\$2,880,721	\$3,303,087	\$9,231,198	\$12,562,440	\$3,569,653	\$7,600,964	\$10,794,868	\$11,542,696	<b>\$232,073,115</b>
*Indirect Effects:	\$240,244,907	\$10,518,699	\$4,234,659	\$4,855,539	\$13,569,861	\$18,466,787	\$5,247,390	\$11,173,417	\$15,868,455	\$16,967,763	<b>\$341,147,477</b>
<b>Total Impact:</b>	<b>\$403,676,817</b>	<b>\$17,674,277</b>	<b>\$7,115,380</b>	<b>\$8,158,626</b>	<b>\$22,801,058</b>	<b>\$31,029,227</b>	<b>\$8,817,043</b>	<b>\$18,774,381</b>	<b>\$26,663,323</b>	<b>\$28,510,460</b>	<b>\$573,220,592</b>

*\*Indirect effects include community-level effects such as sales taxes, real-estate, local employment and other similar factors*

**Source:** Rail Passengers Association modeling estimate

**Note:** All Michigan's passenger rail service is state-supported (it does not have any long-distance service).



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# Deborah Fischer Stout

President, Northern Flyer Alliance





# State Level Rail Advocacy





# Taking Advantage of Opportunities

External opportunities

Organization-induced opportunities



# Use either to get to know State Legislators

- Why does this work?
  - Legislators want to look like they're on top of things
  - They're busy and appreciate constituents with concise, timely, helpful knowledge
  - Many want leadership opportunities



## External Opportunities

- Reauthorization – Resolution
- ARRA - Resolution
- Fast Act – Wichita Mayor met with BNSF, Amtrak, KDOT
- New President - Legislation
- New Governor – New Transportation Plan that includes Operational Funding for new service
- Union Station Development Open House – 3 Mayor Letter
- New Transportation Secretary – Conversation about new service
- Chamber Legislative Open House – Sponsor for legislation
- Mayor or City Council member – Local leader willing to take on a leadership role



# Organization-induced opportunities

## \*Resolutions of Support

- Gave presentations to cities, counties, clubs, etc.
- Presented Resolutions to Senate Transportation Committee

## \*Find Local Leaders willing to take on a leadership role

- Thru-way Bus Between Newton and OKC
- Inspection Train in 2017

## \*Be willing to do something hard

- Write resolutions and legislation and find a Sponsor
- Year long Marketing Campaign that resulted in 26 Kansas Rail Caucus members
- Symposium – media coverage

**Website:**

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# Q&A

Moderated by Madi Butler, Communications Manager  
Rail Passengers Association

**Panel Featuring:**

Wayne Davis

Laura Kliewer

Deborah Fischer Stout

Sean Jeans-Gail

Jim Mathews, President & CEO  
Rail Passengers Association





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# Answering your questions

Thank you to those who submitted questions by email!

We will be addressing the more in-depth questions in our follow up coverage and hosting video of today's recording at [railpassengers.org/webinars](http://railpassengers.org/webinars)

Be sure to check out past presentations and register for upcoming webinars at [railpassengers.org](http://railpassengers.org)



# Answering your questions

## Question #1

What is the best way to approach a Congressional representative, such as Adam Kinzinger (IL-16), who has no less than six (6) Amtrak & state supported routes(\*) crossing his district, with two more on the planning board, to be supportive of Amtrak and other rail projects? Based on his voting record, It appears to be a non-issue for him.

(\*) Chicago to Galesburg and beyond (Southwest Chief & California Zephyr); to Springfield and beyond (Texas Eagle & City of New Orleans); and state-supported routes from Chicago to Springfield & St. Louis, Chicago to Carbondale, Chicago to Quincy; and proposed services from Chicago to Rockford, and Chicago to the Quad-Cities



# Answering your questions

## Question #2

In my state (Minnesota), it has become quite apparent that one major party has declared vehement, almost derisive refusal to invest in passenger rail of any sort has become a litmus test for legislators to be granted support and power within the caucus. This has resulted in the defeat of state funding for several broadly supported intra and interstate rail projects here even when some of those projects are shovel ready, and in one case would have gained a TRIPLE match from the Feds. This anti rail attitude has been heavily lobbied and richly advertised by usual suspect PACs.

Has this been a roadblock to improved state rail programs elsewhere?

Can anyone offer suggestions as to how this might be most effectively countered by rail advocates?



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# Answering your questions

Questions from the Chat!

# Thank You!

Next month's webinar:

Rail Advocate "Coffee Break"

Featuring Jim Mathews & John Robert Smith

Wednesday, February 17th @ 2pm

