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The Value Of Constructive Engagement:

The political and legislative landscape for passenger rail in 2020

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Rail Passengers Association

Washington, DC

BOTTOM-LINE UP FRONT

Constructive Engagement:

Policy Partnerships Are Leading To Real Gains



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- *Rail Passengers'* consistent message: “Trains **deliver value to served communities** six, seven or more times the dollars invested in the service”
 - The “profit” goes to the communities and the U.S., not necessarily to Amtrak
 - The “profit” is **value** for the Nation, and Congress is willing to invest in value
 - Amtrak should not be afraid to be **bold** and to advance a vision for helping rural communities and urban centers **create value**
- Value vs. Profit is an important idea to advance to set the stage for **reauthorization** of the five-year Surface Transportation bill (the “FAST Act”)
- Also important as bipartisan consensus emerges on the need for a **large infrastructure bill**

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- *Rail Passengers Association* is making the most aggressive **credible** case for return on taxpayers' equity...and ***Congress is listening***
 - *Rail Passengers'* study on Southwest Chief: **\$180m annual benefit** to Kan., Colo., N. Mex.
 - *Rail Passengers'* study on 'Baby Builder' between CHI and MSP: **\$47m+ annual benefit**
 - *Rail Passengers'* study on Empire Builder end-to-end: **\$327m annual benefit**
 - Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama took a huge step last month towards launching new Mobile-New Orleans service that will return least **\$170.7 million** to the local economies every year for a roughly \$5 million - \$7 million annual operating investment
- Working very closely with many Congressional offices to advance the interests of rail passengers and to strengthen support for **creating an Amtrak that can grow new service without sacrificing long-distance trains**

BOTTOM-LINE UP FRONT

Constructive Engagement:

Policy Partnerships Are Leading To Real Gains



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Rail Passengers Association members and supporters need to do THESE THREE THINGS:

1. Engage With Your Rep To Securing Near-Term Funding for Amtrak + Passenger Rail
 - Ask your Representative to sign-on to the **FY2021 House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee “Dear Colleague” letter led by Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.)**, which calls for full funding of Amtrak and passenger rail grant programs
 - Reach out to your Representative and Senators to identify any key passenger rail or transit projects which would benefit from Amtrak or rail grant funding
 - Ask your Representative and Senators to support both the funding levels and the policy proposals in Amtrak’s 2021 Legislative Report & Grant request
 - Ask your Representatives and Senators to **REJECT** the Administration’s proposed Amtrak cuts in its 2021 budget proposal
2. Share Our Briefing Documents
 - Find these at RailPassengers.org/RailNation2020
3. Schedule a Meeting for RailNation:DC 2020
 - There are only **FOUR WEEKS** until our Passenger Rail Day on the Hill, so the time to begin scheduling is **NOW!**
 - You can schedule these meetings in D.C. or in your state; in-person or as a phone call.
 - Find out more about how to schedule these meetings—and share them with Rail Passengers staff—at RailPassengers.org/RailNation2020



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380 days ago from today...



U.S.

Amtrak Plan to Expand Ridership Could Sidetrack Storied Trains

Railroad wants to offer more service between cities in fast-growing regions. That could mean swapping sleepers for passenger cars

as to board Amtrak's Southwest Chief in Albuquerque, N.M. The train travels between Chicago and Los Angeles.

By [Ted Mann](#) / Photographs by [Adria Malcolm](#) for *The Wall Street Journal*

Feb. 20, 2019 7:00 am ET

SHARE TEXT

545 RESPONSES

WASHINGTON—Seeking to attract millions more passengers, Amtrak is preparing an overhaul of its national network targeting increased service in the South and West—at the expense of long-haul routes beloved by train buffs and their allies in Congress.

The goal is to revamp the way Amtrak runs trains on the aging network of national routes it already maintains, with more frequent service between pairs of cities, such as Atlanta and Charlotte, N.C., or Cleveland and Cincinnati. Running more trains over shorter distances

INTO THE NEW

THE HIDDEN VALUE
**CULTURE
MAKERS**

When culture makers lead, organizations grow twice as fast



HAPPENING NOW

REMEMBER 'NATIONAL OR NOTHING'?

February 20, 2019

National Network Trains And Corridor Growth Can Co-exist

putting its money where its mouth is, appropriating near-record dollars for a second year to advance Amtrak service around the country.

Against that backdrop, it's clear that Amtrak need not be timid in asking Congress to support growth and new services. There is political and fiscal appetite to do more, and that's the plan Amtrak should submit. We do not need to choose, especially when the choice offered is a false one. That's the message I've delivered consistently to Amtrak over the past year, and it's one you can help amplify by getting in touch with your congressional representative or Senator. [\(Members can find their elected officials by following this link.\)](#)

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The 'FAST' Act And What Comes Next: Rail Passengers' *Blueprint* Proposals

Rail Passengers' Reauthorization *Blueprint* proposes initiatives in three broad areas



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Sustainable Service on National Network

- Legally Enshrine Importance of National Network to U.S. transportation + Rural America
- As Amtrak loses credibility on service questions with Congress, Rail Passengers can move to fill the void
- Work with Amtrak to add state-supported service



Fix Host/Operator Relationship

- On-Time Performance and Fairness for Passengers
- Shared-Use Corridor Advisory Committee
- Creation of a Right of Way Acquisition Program
- Advance Right of Way Acquisition Authority



Rebuilding the Fleet

- Fund New Equipment through FY2020 appropriations
- Establish a stable funding mechanism to allow for critical investments in equipment
- Domestic Rail Equipment Manufacturing Incentivization



Visit www.railpassengers.org/blueprint for proposal details and ways to get involved



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Fast-forward to today...



FY2021 Amtrak Highlights:

- National Network Grants: \$1.3 billion
 - *Southwest Chief* track improvements: \$4.9 million
- Northeast Corridor Grants: \$714 million
- **Corridor Development Program: \$300 million**

Total: \$2.34 billion

Fleet Plan Updates:

- \$2.6 billion for equipment in FY2021 (including \$1+ billion for Long Distance)
- Additional Identified Equipment Needs
 - **Superliner and Amfleet II Replacement: \$2.0 billion**
 - Diesel Locomotive Replacement (base order plus options): Approx. \$1.5 billion
 - Additional Fleet for New Corridors (for FY21-FY25 routes): \$510 million

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Amtrak's Growth Vision:

FY2021 Legislative Report + Grant Request



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Eight Amtrak Leg & Grant Proposals Mirroring The *Rail Passengers Blueprint*

- Long-Distance Intercity Passenger Rail Working Group
 - A 'peace agreement' between Class I's and pax-rail for on-time performance
- Dispatch Preference Enforcement (Rail Passenger Fairness Act)
- Study on Precision Scheduled Railroading's effect on fluidity and performance
- Process improvements for access to host railroads for new routes and service
- Rail-Airport Connections
- Passenger Rail Trust Fund
- Flexing Highway Trust Fund General Revenues
- Passenger-Freight Railroad Shared Tax Credit

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Advancing Passenger Rail Policy: In D.C., It's Always 'Infrastructure Week'



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- Broad bipartisan agreement exists in Washington that an infrastructure plan is needed
 - **House Democrats unveiled five-year, \$760 billion infrastructure framework**
 - **\$55 billion for rail**
 - **\$105 billion for public transit**
 - Senate Environment/Public Works released a highway reauthorization with a 27% increase over current spending levels
 - Transit and rail proposals coming this spring
 - All the leading Democratic Party presidential primary candidates have proposed infrastructure plans worth at least \$1 trillion, as has President Trump

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Advancing Passenger Rail Policy: *Rail Passengers Working With Congress*



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Rep. Tonko (D-N.Y.) is a strong friend to passenger rail

- Infrastructure development
- Transportation and rail safety
- Transportation research
- Amtrak investment

Cosponsored \$760B 5-year *Move Forward* infrastructure plan

- Transformative \$55 billion rail proposals
- \$105 billion in transit mobility

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Advancing Passenger Rail Policy: *Rail Passengers Working With Congress*



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House Transportation & Infrastructure staff; Senate Commerce staff

- FAST Act re-authorization
- Food & Beverage
- On-time performance
- Amtrak investment

Rep. Cohen (D-Tenn.)

- Food & Beverage
- Customer service minima

Reps. Lamb (D-Pa.), Heck (D-Pa.)

- Amtrak forced arbitration

Rep. Kuster (D-N.H.)

- RRIF reform

Reps. Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.), Boyle (D-Pa.)

- Amtrak customer call center

Rep. Moulton (D-Mass.)

- Full Amtrak funding
- North-South Rail Link

Rep. Lipinski (D-Ill.)

- FAST Act re-authorization
- Rail safety
- On-time performance

Sen. Durbin (D-Ill.)

- On-time performance
- Preference enforcement

Sen. Wicker (R-Miss.)

- Gulf Coast restoration

Sen. Moran (R-Kan.)

- Securing long-distance

Sens. Daines (R-Mont.), Capito (W.Va.)

- Amtrak Station Agents

Sen. Blumenthal (D-Conn.)

- Amtrak forced arbitration

Sen. Markey (D-Mass.)

- Passenger rail corridor grants
- Grade-crossing safety

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Advancing Passenger Rail Policy: Pushing Back On Proposed Cuts



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- White House has targeted severe cuts to Amtrak's budget as part of FY2021 budget proposal:
 - National Network funding cut by \$689 million as part of a plan to eliminate long-distance train routes
 - \$550 million in National Network "transformational grants" which would draw down to zero over five years
 - Northeast Corridor funding cut by \$375 million
- The response from Rail Passengers' members has been fantastic!
 - Over 2,800 messages to **96 U.S. Senators** and **423 Representatives** in one week
 - Go to www.RailPassengers.org/Action to take part in our campaign

COMPLACENCY IS NOT AN OPTION!



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The outlook for the next few months...and what *your* game-plan should be

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The 'FAST' Act And What Comes Next: The Clock Is Ticking!



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Window for legislative action is short due to election,
with a long to-do list for Congress:

- ✓ Feb. 28 – Appropriations Deadlines for Member Offices
- ✓ March 3 - Super Tuesday
- March – House T&I Rail Title Hearing
- July 13 + Aug. 24 – Party Conventions
- Sept. 30 – FAST Act + FY2020 Budget Act expires
- Oct. 13 – Election recess begins



Two “Must-Pass” bills by October 1

- FY21 budget or Continuing Resolution (CR) – to avoid a government shutdown
- Replacement or short-term extension of Surface Transportation authorization – to avoid losing gas-tax revenue for highways and transit

If the past predicts the future...:

- Congress will close shop by June to focus on elections
- Expect short-term extensions

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The 'FAST' Act And What Comes Next: Re-Authorization Sets Long-Term Policy



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**2020 program tied to the
surface-transportation
reauthorization process**

- ***There is a good chance that this bill will not achieve final passage in 2020***
- However, passenger advocates need to articulate a clear set of principles and policies for the rail and transit titles and be able to incorporate them into our messaging around the must-pass FY 2021 Appropriations bill
- Whatever drafts are produced by the House and Senate will heavily influence the final product

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The 'FAST' Act And What Comes Next: Passenger Account Funding Levels



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	<i>Passenger Rail Funding (in millions)</i>				
	<i>FY2021</i>	<i>FY2022</i>	<i>FY2023</i>	<i>FY2024</i>	<i>FY2025</i>
<i>Program</i>					
<i>Amtrak - National Network</i>	<i>\$1,280.6</i>	<i>\$1,344.6</i>	<i>\$1,411.8</i>	<i>\$1,482.4</i>	<i>\$1,556.6</i>
<i>Amtrak - NEC</i>	<i>\$715.0</i>	<i>\$786.5</i>	<i>\$865.2</i>	<i>\$951.7</i>	<i>\$1,046.8</i>
<i>Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Grants</i>	<i>\$1,968.0</i>	<i>\$2,187.0</i>	<i>\$2,430.0</i>	<i>\$2,700.0</i>	<i>\$3,000.0</i>
<i>Federal State Partnership for State of Good Repair</i>	<i>\$1,312.2</i>	<i>\$1,458.0</i>	<i>\$1,620.0</i>	<i>\$1,800.0</i>	<i>\$2,000.0</i>
<i>Restoration & Enhancement Grants</i>	<i>\$262.4</i>	<i>\$291.6</i>	<i>\$324.0</i>	<i>\$360.0</i>	<i>\$400.0</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$5,538.2</i>	<i>\$6,067.7</i>	<i>\$6,651.0</i>	<i>\$7,294.1</i>	<i>\$8,003.4</i>

We can't let calls for future transformation distract from need for significant, immediate increase in passenger rail investment

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Reaching Out To Your Members Of Congress NOW To Ensure A Beneficial 2020 For Passengers



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QUESTIONS

- More questions? Reach out to sjeansgail@narprail.org
- 202-408-8362
- www.railpassengers.org