



from the
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS**

Vol. 24, No. 2 February, 1990

John R. Martin, Pres.; Eugene Skoropowski, V. Pres.; Robert Glover, Sec.; Joseph Horning, Jr., Treas.; Ross Capon, Exec. Dir.; Scott Leonard, Asst. Dir.; Jane Colgrove, Membership Dir.; Harriet Parcels, Transp. Assoc.

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(This has news through Feb. 23. No. 1 was mailed 1st class Feb. 12 & 14.)

RETURN REQUESTED

NARP Defends Amtrak

Skinner's Testimony: "Does Amtrak Have a Future?"

In testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Secretary of Transportation Samuel K. Skinner said: "The key question about Amtrak is: what is the future? Does it have a future? If it does, where is it?"

NARP's response, a letter to Mr. Skinner detailing the importance of the entire Amtrak system, is reprinted in full below.

Skinner told the subcommittee on Feb. 8: "Many would argue that Amtrak is really 2 organizations—one in the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and a kind of tourist organization in other parts of the country, like ocean liner cruises.

"It's quite clear, even though [Amtrak Pres.] Graham Claytor has done a great job improving the revenue-to-cost ratio, there are a number of impediments to self-sufficiency. We are going to examine those this year and see how Amtrak can recover most of its expenses, at least in the NEC . . .

"Amtrak would contend that it faces antiquated work rules and liability laws not consistent with a productive economy or what Amtrak's competitors face. We'll be looking at a lot of that this year. We've got to see if Amtrak can become self-sufficient or if there is a compelling reason for a major subsidy."

Rep. Silvio O. Conte (R-MA) responded: "I agree with some of that, but I saw Amtrak when it first started. Compared to the large subsidies it used to get, Amtrak is pretty close to [breakeven]. I worry that if we don't invest in Amtrak, we'll regret it. If we do invest, Amtrak will be in the black by 2000 and won't be looking for subsidies. We shouldn't cut it out now. I'll be pitching to put it back in."

Conte also lamented the lack of NEC Improvement Project funding in the Bush budget; he noted the growing importance of NEC trains in light of air congestion. Skinner responded, "There's no question in my mind that it's less expensive and more sure to take the train from Washington to New York than to go any other way. We'll be encouraging" that kind of train travel.

Skinner noted that Mr. Claytor, Federal Rail Administrator Gil Carmichael, and Amtrak Board Member Haley Barbour were in Sweden viewing high speed rail technology.

Rep. Lawrence Coughlin (R-PA) asked Skinner if "there is a role for intercity passenger rail in the new policy." Skinner said: "Yes, the policy does point out that [passenger trains] can have a significant role, but it also calls for the elimination of non-profitable routes."

NARP's Letter to the Secretary

The following letter from NARP Exec. Dir. Ross Capon was delivered to Mr. Skinner on Feb. 16: "We appreciated your kind words about New York-Washington Amtrak service at the Feb. 8 House Appropriations hearing, but your other Amtrak comments cried out for the following response, which we hope you will review carefully.

"I understood you to say 'many would argue that Amtrak is really 2 organizations—one in the NEC and a kind of tourist organization in other parts of the country, like ocean cruises.' I believe this oversimplification is misleading, particularly in its implication that everything outside the Corridor is frivolous and could easily be dispensed with.

"In summary, your statement overlooks:

- the many corridor services Amtrak runs other than Boston-Washington;

- the many different functions long-distance trains perform, including provision of the only public transport in many rural communities;

- the intricate economic and political interrelationships among Amtrak's different services; and

- the fact that many veterans of battles to end Amtrak services now think these fights were energy wasted; it would be better to focus (as did your NEC comments) on how to make the service more efficient. This could lead both to expanded Amtrak service and to more spin-off benefits for the rail freight industry.

"Unlike airlines and bus companies, Amtrak is infrastructure and carrier rolled into one. In the NEC, Amtrak is the rail equivalent of the airlines, the FAA traffic control system, and the various airports. This is true to some extent elsewhere, although Amtrak is paying freight railroads track-use fees. The point is that Amtrak costs are not hidden as are some costs of other modes.

OTHER CORRIDORS

"These corridors can be justified with the same arguments

(continued on page 4)

NEW MEXICO		
1. Schiff (R)	•	•
2. Skeen (R)	•	•
3. Richardson (D)	•	•

NEW YORK		
1. Hochbrueckner (D)	•	•
2. Downey (D)	•	•
3. Mrazek (D)	•	•
4. Lent (R)	•	•
5. McGrath (R)	•	•
6. Flake (D)	•	•
7. Ackerman (D)	•	•
8. Scheuer (D)	•	•
9. Manton (D)	•	•
10. Schumer (D)	•	•
11. Towns (D)	•	•
12. Owens (D)	•	•
13. Solara (D)	•	•
14. Molinari (R)	•	•
15. Green (R)	•	•
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17. Weiss (D)	•	•
18. Garcia (D)	•	•
19. Engel (D)	•	•
20. Lowey (D)	•	•
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22. Gilman (R)	•	•
23. McNulty (D)	•	•
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26. Martin (R)	•	•
27. Walsh (R)	•	•
28. McHugh (D)	•	•
29. Horton (R)	•	•
30. Slaughter (D)	•	•
31. Paxon (R)	•	•
32. LaFalce (D)	•	•
33. Nowak (D)	•	•
34. Houghton (R)	•	•

NORTH CAROLINA		
1. Jones (D)	•	•
2. Valentine (D)	•	•
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4. Price (D)	•	•
5. Neal (D)	•	•
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7. Rose (D)	•	•
8. Hefner (D)	•	•
9. McMillan (R)	•	•
10. Ballenger (R)	•	•
11. Clarke (D)	•	•

NORTH DAKOTA		
AL Dorgan (D)	•	•

OHIO		
1. Luken (D)	•	•
2. Gradison (R)	•	•
3. Hall (D)	•	•
4. Oxley (R)	•	•
5. Gillmor (R)	•	•
6. McEwen (R)	•	•
7. DeWine (R)	•	•
8. Lukens (R)	•	•
9. Kaptur (R)	•	•
10. Miller (R)	•	•
11. Eckart (D)	•	•
12. Kasich (R)	•	•
13. Fesse (D)	•	•
14. Sawyer (D)	•	•
15. Willie (R)	•	•
16. Regula (R)	•	•
17. Tefaticant (D)	•	•
18. Applegate (D)	•	•
19. Feighan (D)	•	•
20. Oaker (D)	•	•
21. Stokes (D)	•	•

OKLAHOMA		
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5. Edwards (R)	•	•
6. English (D)	•	•

OREGON		
1. AuCoin (D)	•	•
2. Smith, R. (R)	•	•
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4. DeFazio (D)	•	•
5. Smith, D. (R)	•	•

PENNSYLVANIA		
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5. Schulze (R)	•	•
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8. Kostmayer (D)	•	•
9. Shuster (R)	•	•
10. McDade (R)	•	•
11. Kanjorski (D)	•	•
12. Murtha (D)	•	•
13. Coughlin (R)	•	•
14. Coyne (D)	•	•
15. Ritter (R)	•	•
16. Walker (R)	•	•
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18. Walgren (D)	•	•
19. Goodling (R)	•	•
20. Gaydos (D)	•	•
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23. Clinger (R)	•	•

RHODE ISLAND		
1. Machtley (R)	•	•
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SOUTH CAROLINA		
1. Ravenel (R)	•	•
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TENNESSEE		
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TEXAS		
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3. Bartlett (R)	•	•
4. Hall (D)	•	•
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UTAH		
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9. Boucher (D)	•	•
10. Wolf (R)	•	•

WASHINGTON		
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8. Chandler (R)	•	•

WEST VIRGINIA		
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5. Moody (D)	•	•
6. Petri (R)	•	•
7. Obey (D)	•	•
8. Roth (R)	•	•
9. Sensenbrenner (R)	•	•

WYOMING		
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\$5,995 includes roundtrip airfare (Swissair) NY-Zurich, 1st class rail travel, double-occupancy hotel & sleeping-car rooms, local transfers in Europe, meals on trains with diners, selected other meals, and a \$250 contribution to NARP.

Tour director: Ronald C. Sheck, former NARP board member, now dir., Transp. Programs Div., New Mexico Highway & Transp. Dept. Tour staff includes J.D. Arnold, General Manager, Rocky Mountain Tours, who has lived and worked in Italy, Switzerland, and France.

Additional info: Rocky Mountain Tours, 1323 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, NM 87501. 24-hour phone: 505/984-1684. ■

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15. Wylie (R)	•	•
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SOUTH DAKOTA		
AL Johnson (D)	•	•

TENNESSEE		
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6. Gordon (D)	•	•
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TEXAS		
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2. Wilson (D)	•	•
3. Bartlett (R)	•	•
4. Hall (D)	•	•
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18. VACANT	•	•
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26. Arney (R)	•	•
27. Ortiz (D)	•	•

UTAH		
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2. Owens (D)	•	•
3. Nielson (R)	•	•

VERMONT		
AL Smith (R)	•	•

VIRGINIA		
1. Bateman (R)	•	•
2. Pickell (D)	•	•
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6. Olin (D)	•	•
7. Slaughter (R)	•	•
8. Parcis (R)	•	•
9. Boucher (D)	•	•
10. Wolf (R)	•	•

WASHINGTON		
1. Miller (R)	•	•
2. Swift (D)	•	•
3. Unsoeld (D)	•	•
4. Morrison (R)	•	•
5. Foley (D)	•	•
6. Dicks (D)	•	•
7. McBernett (D)	•	•
8. Chandler (R)	•	•

WEST VIRGINIA		
1. Mollohan (D)	•	•
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3. Wise (D)	•	•
4. Rahall (D)	•	•

WISCONSIN		
1. Aspin (D)	•	•
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3. Gunderson (R)	•	•
4. Kleczka (D)	•	•
5. Moody (D)	•	•
6. Petri (R)	•	•
7. Obey (D)	•	•
8. Roth (R)	•	•
9. Sensenbrenner (R)	•	•

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