

March 2, 2016

240230

Ms. Cynthia Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-001

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
March 2, 2016
Part of
Public Record

Re: STB Docket No. EP 728

Dear Ms. Brown:

Enclosed for electronic filing in the above captioned proceeding are comments received through the Regulations.gov Website, located at "WWW.REGULATIONS.GOV".

Questions regarding Regulations.gov should be directed to the Regulations.gov help desk available Monday – Friday from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM EST at 877-378-5457.

Sincerely,

eRulemaking Program Management Office
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW.
Washington, DC 20460
fdms@erulemakinghelpdesk.com

MARC C. COAN

February 4, 2016

To: U.S. Surface Transportation Board
Fax: VIA INTERNET UPLOAD
RE: Notice Of Proposed Statement Of Board Policy, 12/28/15

Hello,

I am a rider of Amtrak's long distance service. My typical trip is from Lamy, NM to Kansas City, MO. As a businessperson traveling for business, I find this service convenient because it gets me to Kansas City at about 7:30am and I can conduct a full day of business.

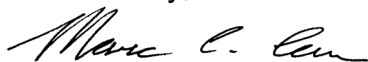
I wish to object to this proposed statement of board policy and seek its withdrawal. 49 USC 24308c requires the burden of proof for an exemption of the requirement that host railroads give preference to Amtrak trains be placed on the host railroad. Your policy statement would contradict the law and require Amtrak to show that preference for its trains would not "materially lessen the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers."

That's backwards. That was not the intention of Congress, backed up by court rulings, which have made it clear that preference must be given to Amtrak trains unless the host railroad can successfully argue for an exemption (based on a real, not perceived, hardship for shippers).

You took this action without hearing any evidence or public testimony, and without a formal rulemaking procedure. That is a wrongheaded approach and it is not the way rules and laws are supposed to be made in America.

I urge you to withdraw the proposed statement of board policy.

Sincerely,


Marc Coan

623 West Oakdale
Chicago, IL 60657
bob.johnston1111@gmail.com
(312) 402-8876 cell
February 17, 2016

Daniel Elliott
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

Re: [Comment on Docket EP 728: Policy statement on “preference”](#)

Dear Mr. Elliott:

Reporting on passenger rail operations in the United States and Canada since 1991 for *Trains* Magazine and having traveled on virtually every Amtrak route and many U.S. and Canadian railroads prior to that company's inception, I strongly disagree with the Surface Transportation Board's December 28, 2015, decision that would needlessly complicate the process of determining whether or not a host railroad grants “preference” to passenger trains.

Taking a “global view” requiring evidence of a host carrier's internal processes and incentives, as well as evidence indicating how policies have impacted train delays is simply not practical because as private entities, railroads (including Amtrak) can and would declare that supporting documents are proprietary. This is especially true of operating agreements that specify on-time performance incentives and penalties. These provide the framework on which schedules are devised and compensation is determined and they are negotiated between Amtrak and the railroads to account for routine delays, building in recovery time and dwell time along with running time.

Frankly, such investigations would always be inconclusive because of the time and effort the STB would take in attempting to establish a “pattern.”

But determining whether passenger trains are not given preference is easy to measure and the process doesn't need to include any extenuating circumstances except propulsion or mechanical failure: **An “incident” occurs each time a train substantially falls behind the agreed-upon schedule.**

When a carrier accumulates enough incidents, a fine is in order, just as drivers receive when they violate traffic laws.

The STB can decide

1. How much of a delay constitutes an egregious and reportable delay
2. How many accumulated incidents would warrant a fine.

The 1973 statute is clear: when dispatchers are confronted with a traffic conflict at a junction or on a congested railroad, they must make every effort to advance a passenger train over a freight train. This law was established by Congress to give relief to railroad passengers riding a publicly-funded entity.

Despite the law, delays exist. Here are examples during the last week involving CSX Transportation and Amtrak trains on one route:

- Feb 12, 2016—Train 97, the *Silver Meteor*, was delayed one hour, 29 minutes between Winter Haven and West Palm Beach, Fla.
- Feb 15, 2016—Train 97 was delayed one hour, 49 minutes, between Richmond, Va., and Rocky Mount, N.C.
- Feb 16, 2015—Train 97 was delayed one hour, 17 minutes between the same two points.

Automatically-generated Amtrak and CSX reporting data can easily determine if failure to grant “preference” caused these delays. If there was passenger train interference or a mechanical issue with the Amtrak equipment, for example, the incident would not “count.”

Yes, of course there are situations where delaying a passenger train to accommodate passage of a freight train too long to fit into a passing track is the most expeditious move, but the number and length of these incidents can be tracked without a full-blown investigation. Determining a pattern is not necessary, only the number of incidents.

If a passenger train is due, the people making strategic preference decisions must clearly know that they are expected to give priority to that train first, with penalties imposed if they don't. Any STB rule or policy should be no more complicated than that.

Bob Johnston

Docket No. EP-728-0

Robert P. Lawrence
14417 31st Drive S.E.
Mill Creek, WA 98012
rplaw88@hotmail.com

To: Surface Transportation Board
From: Robert P. Lawrence
Re: Amtrak Policy Statement

Date: February 5, 2016

I make many AMTRAK trips every year using both regional and long distance trains.

My trips usually originate at the Everett or Seattle, WA Stations.

AMTRAK preference on freight railroads contributes to better on time performance. This is very important to me and all other passengers using these services. It is also important to WA State DOT as it impacts the ridership of the state financed Cascades Train Service. Poor OTP reduces ridership as the public reacts to the lack of schedule adherence, by seeking other means of travel, Usually by using their own automobiles. This inhibits the DOT's effort to maximize revenues and reduce subsidies.

This unnecessary policy statement should be withdrawn and existing law should be enforced as far as giving AMTRAK preference on freight rail roads.

Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns,

Signed

Robert P Lawrence

(EP-~~726~~-0)

I ride Amtrak a lot and am a member of their Guest Rewards program. If I have a choice, I will always take the train over a plane and never a bus. Much more comfortable, can eat or use restroom at any time, and scenery is always better than 33,000'.

I depart from St Paul Union Depot in MN. Train #8 has been horrifically late due to dispatching and being put behind oil and other freights. What other country does that? We used to be number one- now we are in last place.

Why on earth would human "cargo" ever be less important than freight? Passenger trains must always have priority over freight. IN 1971 Amtrak was created to save the railroads from bankruptcy and the passenger rail priority made sense then and makes even more sense today. Today we are seeing a resurgence of passenger rail in the USA.

The **late** Empire Builder almost killed the train- just look at the ridership numbers the past 4 years and they speak volumes. My wife still doesn't want to ride Amtrak as it isn't on time and she doesn't fly. Amtrak wouldn't guarantee any connections for years in Chicago, which is the hub. This means we would need to use another day of vacation and pay for a hotel in Chicago due to missed trains. In the meantime BNSF & CP railroads are rolling in the dough and Amtrak is starving for passengers due to freight interference or poor traffic management. I see that as ripping off taxpayers or subsidizing their business. Late trains make it difficult to attend meetings like I did in Wisconsin Dells or Lacrosse recently as you don't ever know when the train will show up. How can you plan?

It is hard to imagine our trains averaging such slow speeds with so much padding in the schedule and they are STILL late. It is embarrassing and difficult to imagine why America has such undependable trains and the economic handicap it presents for our country. Imagine if our planes were that undependable. As a veteran who served one tour in Germany I was amazed at the on time performance of the German system we built after WW2. It allows for passengers to transfer from a bus or plane to a train seamlessly.

I would like to suggest that at the very minimum larger towns along LD trains have their trains arrive within 10 minutes of schedule. This would include towns like Winona, St Cloud, Fargo/ Moorhead for starters. Same with end towns like Chicago, Seattle, or Portland for the Empire Builder. It would be nice to have some consequences for late trains- even a hearing would be great to solve the problem quickly. Keeping the public input is a critical component in keeping American trains on time.

Jerry Ratliff
1484 Van Buren Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104-1930
JerRatliff@Comcast.Net

To: Surface Transportation Board

From: Michael Wilhelmi
4711 La Cantora CT SE
Rio Rancho, NM 87124
michaelw_abq@yahoo.com

Dear Surface Transportation Board,

I find your proposal "Policy Statement on Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions of 49 U.S.C. 24308(c) and (f)" ridiculous.

Why? Because the transportation department has never seen fit to purchase land from U.S. railway companies parallel to there tracks so that passenger trains can run on time. Because the United States Government has never had foresight to do this Amtrak trains will never run on time. Passenger rail service could increase in rider ship big time—in my opinion—if the government did this it could reduce travel time in half. The Amtrak system could become as large as passenger rail service was in the heyday's of rail service in the 1950's and early 1960's.

With the constant congestion on the interstate system it only makes sense to have dedicated tracks for passenger rail service. You only have to look at Europe to see how well dedicated tracks work.

Please consider removing your definition of on time service from your proposed provisions.

Sincerely,
Michael Wilhelmi

cc: File
NARP

LAWRENCE W. SCHEYER

6 Stuyvesant Oval, Suite 12E
New York, New York 10009-2426
Tel.: (212) 420-1945
Fax: (212) 358-1788
Email: lscheyer@earthlink.net

January 26, 2016

Surface Transportation Board
Office of Proceedings
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

RE: Docket No.: EP-728

Dear Sir or Madam:

I appreciate the opportunity to provide guidance about revising the Surface Transportation Board's standard interpretation of "on time" performance in connection with its implementing the intercity passenger train on-time performance and preference provisions of 49 U.S.C. 24308(c) and (f).

Please consider this simple, straight forward approach:

1. "On-time" means precisely that: "on-time".

Accordingly, a train that arrives five minutes behind schedule arrives five minutes late.

To define "on-time" any other way serves no useful public purpose. It is deliberately misleading, and creates misinformation that erodes the public's confidence and trust.

In contrast, in countries like Switzerland and Japan railroads truly strive to be "on time" and their positive results in that regard are self-evident. So, American railroads in the 21st Century should follow their example, and this is the goal that needs to be codified into our law -- replacing the obsolete and ineffective old ICC standard.

2. If a train's run is annulled mid-route, it should be counted in the computation of overall "on time" performance (except in cases of natural or man-made disasters). If a run is started, but not completed, it ought not vanish into thin air. It must be counted, and accounted for.

3. The achievement of on-time performance is crucial for American passenger rail services to be successful and gain ridership. Trains must be dependable. If travelers cannot reasonably depend on arriving at their destinations when they expect and need to then ridership will plummet and the result is that those routes will no longer be viable.

So, as the result of this rule revision, I sincerely hope that "on time" will again mean what it always has meant to most rational people: "on time".

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Lawrence W. Scheyer

Please Do Not Reply To This Email.

Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Lawrence

Last Name: Scheyer

Mailing Address: 6 Stuyvesant Oval, #12E

City: New York

Country: United States

State or Province: NY

ZIP/Postal Code: 10009

Email Address: lscheyer@earthlink.net

Organization Name:

Comment: Comments regarding EP-728 (Policy Statement on Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions of 49 U.S.C. 24308(c) and (f):

1. Any definition of the term "on time" to mean arrival at a time different from that on a published schedule defies logic and common sense.

If a train arrival is five minutes behind schedule it is NOT on time, and excusing it from being called "late" serves no useful public purpose.

In countries like Switzerland and Japan, where railroads really strive to be "on time", the positive results are self-evident. Striving for true "on time" performance on a higher percentage of trains is a realistic goal for American railroads in the 21st Century that needs to be codified into law -- replacing the obsolete and ineffective old ICC standard.

2. If a train's run is annulled mid-route, it must count in the computation of "on time" performance (except for natural disaster). If those runs that are started and not completed are ignored, resulting "on time" performance results become meaningless.

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Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:
First Name: Timothy
Last Name: Warner
Mailing Address: #10 Stratford Road 1E
City: Brooklyn
Country: United States
State or Province: NY
ZIP/Postal Code: 11218
Email Address: ttwar@optonline.net
Organization Name: NARP
Comment: Good Afternoon STB,

As a descendant of one of America's Great Rail inventors Sen. Webster Wagner,

I have a great love of all things Rail Road, I find myself regularly taking the

Vermont from NYC to Bellows Falls Vermont, a great ride, however it takes 6 hours

which is much too long a trip, and the reason is the Fright Line.

What can be done to hasten ride?

Sincerely,

Timothy Warner

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Mordecai-Mark

Last Name: Mac Low

Mailing Address: 2527 Naudain St

City: Philadelphia

Country: United States

State or Province: PA

ZIP/Postal Code: 19146

Email Address: mmaclow@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I am a monthly ticket holder on the Amtrak NE Corridor, traveling from Philadelphia to New York Penn Station. I rely on the trains' on time performance to arrive at work. I have no other viable choice to perform my commute.

I oppose shifting the burden of proof from freight railways to Amtrak when requiring demonstration that giving passenger trains preference would materially lessen the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Kevin

Last Name: Whitely

Mailing Address: 103 W 8th St

City: Bayonne

Country: United States

State or Province: NJ

ZIP/Postal Code: 07002

Email Address: Senator.55@hotmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: The number one priority of private freight train companies should be to keep the Amtrak trains operating on time. Freight trains ship freight. Freight doesn't know anything about time. It's unconcerned about any delays. Amtrak on the other hand ships people. People have these things called watches that indicate just how important being on time is to them. People get very upset when their train falls seriously behind time. It also shouldn't be the obligation of Amtrak to show how allowing its trains to run on time would have any effect on the freight railroads. Especially if there isn't any.

I've been riding the trains for twenty years. I take a lot of trips to Charlottesville on Amtrak by way of Newark's Penn Station. It's the only way to go.

Please do not change letting Amtrak trains have priority over freight trains when it comes to being on time. Also don't waste Amtrak's time having them come up with reasons why their trains are having a negative effect on a freight train. It doesn't even make any sense.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Gerald

Last Name: Callison

Mailing Address: 1903 Springport Rd Apt 5

City: Jackson

Country: United States

State or Province: MI

ZIP/Postal Code: 49202

Email Address: grcallison@cai-engr.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I ride Amtrak approximately once every two months from my home in Jackson, MI to visit family in Chicago or Milwaukee, and for business trips throughout the Midwest and Northeast. Additionally, my family frequently takes this service to visit me in Jackson, as some of them are unable to drive due to health reasons.

I believe that a fundamental shortcoming of the proposed rules is that they only measure on time performance at the endpoints. This:

- 1) Does not address travel to non-end points, such as the town that I live in.
- 2) Does not account for the fact that passenger trains travel over routes owned by multiple railroads, and delays may occur on one enroute but penalties would be put upon the one at the railroad end.

Whatever rules or ultimately adopted, it is important that they encourage on time performance throughout the trip, and that a device is put in so that accountability occurs for each railroad that the train travels over.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Alan

Last Name: Krieger

Mailing Address: 5223 Scotch Ridge Road

City: Duanesburg

Country: United States

State or Province: NY

ZIP/Postal Code: 12056

Email Address: alan@krsol.com

Organization Name: Krieger Solutions, LLC

Comment: I ride Amtrak from Albany, NY to NYC for business. Years ago I used to have to go in the night before since the train could be up to 2 hours late on a regular basis. In the past few years, the on time performance improved to the point that I occasionally took a chance and took an early morning train to be on time for a morning meeting. Recently, due to track work, it is again routinely 1 hour late. I think this is due in part to conflicts with Metro North.

I am limited to only those trains that begin in Albany, because service west of Albany is extremely unreliable and almost always late. I think that is due to conflicts with freight trains. That's a shame because I live close to Schenectady and would take the train from there occasionally if it were more reliable. (but the service there is pretty limited).

When it works, Amtrak is extremely convenient and a very pleasant way to travel. I'd strongly encourage rules that give long distance passenger trains priority. If a freight train is delayed an hour, it's not a big deal. Receiving companies can work around that and they'll have lots of advance notice. Local passenger trains run very frequently, so if one is delayed, people can plan ahead and take a slightly earlier one. Long distance passenger trains run less frequently, so taking an earlier one can mean taking one two hours earlier, or in my case, often going in the night before and staying in a hotel. As a small business owner, that either wastes my time and/or money.

Thanks for your consideration.

Alan Krieger

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Joseph
Last Name: Brell
Mailing Address: 607 Center avenue
City: Pittsburgh
Country: United States
State or Province: PA
ZIP/Postal Code: 15215
Email Address: joebrell@hotmail.com
Organization Name: WPPR member.

Comment: Dear Sirs - as to the written policies, I think an important section is that which deals with giving Amtrak trains priority over freight trains. This is important as regards to safety and reliability of passenger train travel. Moving people should be given priority over moving freight.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Owen

Last Name: Cramer

Mailing Address: 747 E. Uintah

City: Colorado Springs

Country: United States

State or Province: CO

ZIP/Postal Code: 80903

Email Address: ocramer@coloradocollege.edu

Organization Name:

Comment: As a fairly frequent passenger on Amtrak's Southwest Chief, Capitol Limited and California Zephyr, as well as the Coast Starlight from time to time, I am concerned about any proposal to weaken the Amtrak preference built into the fundamental law governing passenger rail traffic carried on rail lines not owned by Amtrak.

Delays caused by freight traffic have personally affected me from time to time in the past--and I have not ridden on the Empire Builder or other routes most affected by these delays.

It is too easy to forget that the rail network is a *public* good in this country, often originally set up with generous public support and "bailed out" when threatened by adverse economic and social trends. The general public, and the users of passenger rail service in particular -- many of whom are not well served by other modes of transportation -- have a strong interest in continued and strengthened Amtrak service.

I urge the Board *not* to change the fundamental relationship between Amtrak and the freight rail lines, except to *strengthen* the original intent of Congress to protect the public's access to desirable and essential passenger rail service.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Eric

Last Name: Hirst

Mailing Address: 814 N. Westridge Ave

City: Glendora

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code: 91741

Email Address: eric.hirst@am.sony.com

Organization Name: NARP

Comment: My wife and I regularly use Amtrak for leisure travel. Generally depart from LAX, traveling to Seattle, Chicago, New York and even all the way to Montreal Canada. On time performance is very important to us in order to make connecting trains, buses, hotel reservations, etc.

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Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: James

Last Name: Carrington AICP

Mailing Address:

City: Washington

Country:

State or Province: DC

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address: jameswcarrington@icloud.com

Organization Name:

Comment: In regard to the preference provisions, STB should not take any action that increases the regulatory burden on Amtrak and makes it more difficult (and costly) to operate its passenger service mandate. Amtrak was created with the explicit mandate to operate passenger service on a network mostly owned by other railroads. While this arrangement is problematic for both Amtrak and its host railroads, the solution is not a policy that creates costly and opaque administrative procedures, compliance with which would further drag on Amtrak's ability to fulfill its service mandate efficiently. Finding the right balance between Amtrak and freight is broader issue that must consider state and local needs through real engagement with the railroads, elected officials and the public at large. On highly-congested shared freight+passenger corridors, any talk of preference becomes moot, like trying to give carpools priority on a jammed highway without an HOV lane. Just as the congested highway should prompt stakeholders to consider a range of options for operations and/or infrastructure, each contested stretch of track needs a broad and open discussion of options. STB should focus on facilitating these discussions (and negotiations) rather than creating new administrative burdens that only deepen the freight/passenger stalemate.

In regard to the preference provisions, STB should not take any action that increases the regulatory burden on Amtrak and makes it more difficult (and costly) to operate its passenger service mandate. Amtrak was created with the explicit mandate to operate passenger service on a network mostly owned by other railroads. While this arrangement is problematic for both Amtrak and its host railroads, the solution is not a policy that creates costly and opaque administrative procedures, compliance with which would further drag on Amtrak's ability to fulfill its service mandate efficiently. Finding the right balance between Amtrak and freight is broader issue that must consider state and local needs through real engagement with the railroads, elected officials and the public at large. On highly-congested shared freight+passenger corridors, any talk of preference becomes moot, like trying to give carpools priority on a jammed highway without an HOV lane. Just as the congested highway should prompt stakeholders to consider a range of options for operations and/or infrastructure, each contested stretch of track needs a broad and open discussion of options. STB should focus on facilitating these discussions (and negotiations) rather than creating new administrative burdens that only deepen the freight/passenger stalemate.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Samuel
Last Name: Martland
Mailing Address: 2708 Crawford St.
City: Terre Haute
Country:
State or Province: IN
ZIP/Postal Code:
Email Address: martland@rose-hulman.edu
Organization Name:

Comment: I believe that host railroads should still have to show that granting preference to Amtrak passenger trains would materially harm their freight service. If Amtrak had to prove that granting preference to its trains would not harm freight service, it would need access to information that is controlled by the freight railroads. Moreover, freight railroads would no longer have to justify delaying Amtrak trains, so they would be likely to delay them more often. By allowing railroads to deny preference to Amtrak trains if that preference would damage freight service, the law and the current regulations already give the host railroads ample recourse to protect the speed and efficiency of their freight service. They are already not absolutely required to let Amtrak trains go first or keep their schedules (clearly not, given the number of Amtrak trains that have to wait for freights and thereby become late; last month I was on an eastbound California Zephyr that lost about two hours between Grand Junction and Winter Park because we had to keep stopping at signals; since we were on time at Grand Junction and didn't pass any westbound freights, I assume we were following a freight that had been dispatched out just in front of us rather than put in a siding to let us by). They should still be required to show why they need to delay Amtrak trains.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Brian

Last Name: Rumsey

Mailing Address: 3921B Kaw Rd

City: Manhattan

Country: United States

State or Province: KS

ZIP/Postal Code: 66502

Email Address: brian.rumsey@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I am a regular Amtrak rider. I urge the withdrawal of this policy statement. This statement would limit Amtrak's ability to pressure host railroads for on-time performance, which is crucial to a good transportation network. This has already been defined and should not be redefined behind closed doors.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: John W

Last Name: Turner

Mailing Address: 305 Aundria Dr.

City: Lafayette

Country:

State or Province: Louisiana

ZIP/Postal Code: 70503

Email Address: john@ineedatrip.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I use Amtrak often, and feel that on time performance is a necessity as I often make connections to other trains and late arrivals complicates connecting. I often connect from the COAST STARLIGHT to the SUNSET, and missing this connection is terrible, as the SUNSET runs only thrice weekly, so a wait of 2-3 days is the result of a miss. I ride the Sunset from Lafayette, the CRESCENT from Slidell, and the City of New ORLEANS from Hammond. Lafayette has air service as well as limited Greyhound service.

I feel that it is important to consult those who use Amtrak that their opinions be consulted, and that preference be for a priority of Passenger trains over freight, as per the original Amtrak legislation. Too often that is ignored by the freight railroads. I think that Amtrak should not be forced (as they are now) to accept a 5:45 AM arrival at an endpoint city (Los Angeles.)

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Submitter Info:

First Name: theodore

Last Name: shrady

Mailing Address:

City:

Country:

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address: shradyt@verizon.net

Organization Name:

Comment: Passenger trains on freight railroads should have priority passage like any other common carrier. In most cases, only two trains a day run on trackage outside of big cities. Putting an Amtrak train in a siding for minutes or hours for freight only compounds the lateness of the Amtrak train, and it keeps losing its window of time.

Constantly late passenger trains lose patrons, who turn to crowded highways and congested air lines.

Our country NEEDS a balanced transportation system.

TGS

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: brian

Last Name: schnarr

Mailing Address: 3121 Huntingdon pike 301

City: bryn athyn

Country:

State or Province: PA

ZIP/Postal Code: 19009

Email Address: bleighs96@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I ride Amtrak frequently and depart from Trenton,New Jersey, Tucson,Arizona and Portland, Oregon.

I am delighted to be afforded an opportunity to comment on the intermediate and end stop performance.

First I am a good listener and observer. During my travels in both dining cars, sleeping cars and coaches much of the conversation is about arrival time. Amtrak communications on the trains has improved considerably to alleviate anxiety among passengers.The opportunity to provide excellent electronic communications to all interested parties is available to us.

I would ask the commission to address both intermediate and end stops and keep a simple chart such as 10 minutes late everywhere as a guide.

Finally i would encourage the commission to pay attention to ending the in fight between freight and passengers service. Many solutions are no longer expensive and yet require the cooperation of all parties

I am grateful for the opportunity to comment from someone who would like to increase my time on Amtrak.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Wayne

Last Name: Rovig

Mailing Address: 5621 Itaska Street

City: Saint Louis

Country: United States

State or Province: MO

ZIP/Postal Code: 63109-2880

Email Address: wrovig@att.net

Organization Name:

Comment: As a user of Amtrak passenger rail services, I would like to see the policy statement on preference provisions be withdrawn, because I believe changing what laws say and how theyre applied should be done by elected lawmakers and not by bureaucrats behind closed doors.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: James

Last Name: Crichton

Mailing Address: 29W765 Kensington Dr

City: Warrenville

Country: United States

State or Province: IL

ZIP/Postal Code: 60555

Email Address: jpmarshall2@comcast.net

Organization Name:

Comment: Passenger trains should be given preference over freights as Congress intended.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Paul

Last Name: Birnberg

Mailing Address: 3439 Eleventh Avenue South

City: Minneapolis

Country: United States

State or Province: MN

ZIP/Postal Code: 55407

Email Address: paulb@homelinemn.org

Organization Name: individual

Comment: I live in Minneapolis and take the Empire Builder as well as the various Illinois trains to Champaign on a fairly regular basis.

I do not like the idea of [1] trying what looks like an end run around Congress on this issue; [2] your idea itself. Re #2, why put the burden on Amtrak to prove that the railroad, which has the duty re priority/preference and which has the data involved, has violated its duty. Amtrak would be put into what is akin to trying to prove a negative and with someone else's data (which may or may not even be public). I see no reason to switch the burden of proof on this crucial issue where things are bad enough (I've stopped counting the times my Amtrak train has been late due to waiting on sidings or trailing a freight at 25 mph for many miles.)

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Bill & Linda
Last Name: Lucero
Mailing Address: 1176 SW WARREN AVE
City: TOPEKA
Country: United States
State or Province:
ZIP/Postal Code: 66604-1646
Email Address: lucerolb@cox.net
Organization Name:

Comment: Rail travel is especially important to my wife and myself for interstate transportation. Since host railroads were required to provide Amtrak with priority status, on time performance has been considerably improved this past year and we have seldom experienced delays this year due to competing freight train priorities. We wish to see this practice continued.

Thank you,
Bill & Linda Lucero
1176 SW Warren Av
Topeka KS 66604
lucerolb@cox.net

Rail travel is especially important to my wife and myself for interstate transportation. Since host railroads were required to provide Amtrak with priority status, on time performance has been considerably improved this past year and we have seldom experienced delays this year due to competing freight train priorities. We wish to see this practice continued.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Steve

Last Name: Rocco

Mailing Address: 1900 Westview Drive

City: Owensboro

Country: United States

State or Province: KY

ZIP/Postal Code: 42301

Email Address: steveroc@aol.com

Organization Name:

Comment: It is imperative that the freight railroads be held accountable for the performance of the passenger trains and run over (and pay) to use their lines. If passenger trains did not receive a priority status, it is no telling how many freight trains they would be stuck behind. Already, that is happening far, far too often. Freight railroads should have to pay stiff penalties when they cause a passenger train to be late. The more they delay a passenger train, the stiffer the penalties should be.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Michael

Last Name: Peterson

Mailing Address:

City:

Country:

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: Hi, Surface Transportation Board,

I ride Amtrak. In the wake of 9/11, air travel has become stressful and ridiculous. Amtrak is a welcome respite from that travel nonsense. But it's hard to travel by Amtrak when you live in Texas. We have only the Texas Eagle running along the I35 corridor (and eventually to Chicago and Los Angeles), and the Heartland Flyer traveling to Oklahoma City. The infrequency of trains through Texas makes planning travel on Amtrak a challenge. And poor on-time performance makes it that much harder. Traveling from Dallas/Fort Worth north or south on Amtrak always means a late night arrival at my destination. And delays along the route make it that much later.

There's no excuse for Amtrak trains to be delayed by freight traffic. Amtrak runs regular scheduled service that the freight carriers can effectively schedule around. Instead, the freight carriers chose to delay Amtrak trains so they can run higher density freight traffic to increase profits. Their shareholders become richer and the nation limps along with our embarrassingly poor passenger service. Requiring Amtrak to prove that quality of service provided to freight shippers has been materially lessened is ridiculous. It's as if a person wrongly accused of murder had to prove who the actually murderer was to demonstrate their innocence of any wrong doing. The freight carriers can and will manipulate and withhold data to make it impossible for Amtrak to meet this unreasonable burden. Passenger rail service was transferred from the freight carriers to Amtrak to bail them out and in exchange they agreed to do their best to prioritize passenger traffic. As we've seen, their best isn't very good.

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murderer was to demonstrate their innocence of any wrong doing. The freight carriers can and will manipulate and withhold data to make it impossible for Amtrak to meet this unreasonable burden. Passenger rail service was transferred from the freight carriers to Amtrak to bail them out and in exchange they agreed to do their best to prioritize passenger traffic. As we've seen, their best isn't very good.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Deborah
Last Name: Wallwork
Mailing Address:
City: Fergus Falls
Country: United States
State or Province: MN
ZIP/Postal Code:
Email Address:
Organization Name:

Comment: It is well know that the number one reason that Amtrak has such poor on-time performance is the fact that freight is given precedence over people.

Amtrak's right to preference is contained in Section 24308(c) of Title 49 of the United States Code, which requires that passenger trains receive 'preference over freight transportation in using a rail line, junction, or crossing.' There are two exceptions: (1) in the event of an emergency and (2) when a railroad applies for and receives relief from the Secretary of Transportation".

That is "when a railroad applies.... not when Amtrak applies. The law is clear. Amtrak does not need to, nor should it need to prove to the bureaucrats that a host railroads failure to give preference did NOT materially lessen the quality of freight transportation. That is a violation of the law.

Lack of reliability of train service is the number one reason that our citizens are frustrating with the rail transportation system, which is often the only form of public transportation in rural areas. Here in the Upper Midwest there are many small towns whose only link is the train. As a student, I often rode the train between Fargo and Chicago. While for me, it was a matter of affordability, for many students from smaller towns and families in rural ND and MN the train was the only form of public transportation between their destinations.

And not just for students. This summer my nephew, who is working in the oilfields, took the train to Detroit Lakes, for a vacation with his family. The train is the only direct route between those two destinations, which are more than eight hours apart by the normal routes. He only had the weekend- a very limited time to spend with his family. He departed Stanley, ND on time, but the train was eight hours late getting into Detroit Lakes--- longer than the whole trip should have taken--- because of having to wait for freight. He spent 14 hours on the train. This is the kind of unacceptable experience that turns many Americans off. And it is exactly why those laws about passengers taking precedence over freight were written. Honestly, the freight companies should be paying Amtrak passengers compensation.

We train passengers end up paying the price in terms of frustration-- missing important meetings, family events, and other deadlines because the STB disregards what is a LEGAL OBLIGATION. Many more people would take the train if it had a reputation for being reliable, and Amtrak would be the public service as it is intended to be, if the public was heard.

As taxpayers end up we end paying for that lack of efficiency in a vital service.

This much is clear. The law states passengers over freight. In my area there is only one train a day--- so please explain to me how terrible it is for the freight companies to have to make room in their schedules for ONE PASSENGER TRAIN.

If this policy statement were to take precedent over the law, it would be a significant backstab to the tax payers and the train dependent public. It will cost the taxpayers EVEN MORE, as Amtrak has to conduct reports, and take on law suits just to follow the law and provide the basic service they are mandated by Congress to provide.

This current policy statement is designed to subvert the intent of Congress as expressed some 30 years ago and consistently reaffirmed in in.the law (49 U.S. Code Section 24308c) and subsequent court rulings

It is wrong, and should be torn up and thrown under the next passenger train, so to speak.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Gary

Last Name: Maxwell

Mailing Address: 466 N La Cumbre Rd

City: Santa Barbara

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code: 93110-1511

Email Address: gary@sabaco.comI

Organization Name:

Comment: I and my family travel from time to time on the San Joaquin, Coast Starlight, Surfliner and Capitol Corridor for business and personal reasons. Travel is from Santa Barbara, CA to Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco. Rail travel is important to me, timely and cost effective for me. On Time Performance is prime consideration for train travel. The railroads were relieve of providing passenger service with the condition that passengers service would have preference over freight service. This was fair and agreed upon and must be provided for Amtrak service. The United States should have good reliable rail service along with air and auto transportation. They all meet the needs we all have.

Thank you

Gary Maxwell

I and my family travel from time to time on the San Joaquin, Coast Starlight, Surfliner and Capitol Corridor for business and personal reasons. Travel is from Santa Barbara, CA to Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco. Rail travel is important to me, timely and cost effective for me. On Time Performance is prime consideration for train travel. The railroads were relieve of providing passenger service with the condition that passengers service would have preference over freight service. This was fair and agreed upon and must be provided for Amtrak service. The United States should have good reliable rail service along with air and auto transportation. They all meet the needs we all have.

Thank you

Gary Maxwell

Please Do Not Reply To This Email.

Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Jim

Last Name: Pennell

Mailing Address: 544 Stanton Street

City: Arroyo Grande

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code: 93420

Email Address: almajim@att.net

Organization Name:

Comment: I have been using Amtrak for many years for both local and cross country travel. The train stations I travel from are Grover Beach and San Luis Obispo, California.

I firmly believe that in order for passenger rail to continue improving, the "policy statement" on how the regulators will view the need for a right to preference, needs to be permanently removed.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: James

Last Name: Lampert

Mailing Address: 9120 Mallard Ave.

City: Fountain Valley

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code: 92708-6400

Email Address: JHHL@toast.net

Organization Name:

Comment: Members of the Surface Transportation Board:

The laws passed by Congress, creating Amtrak and defining its relationship with the railroads of America, made a very clear and unambiguous definition of Amtrak's right of preference over freight trains. If that definition is to be changed, then it is the responsibility and prerogative of Congress to do so.

Beginning with a short run from Oakland to Sacramento, aboard the Zephyr, less than a decade after Amtrak's inception, I have been riding passenger trains my entire adult life, including not only Amtrak, but the Alaska Railroad, and various regional, commuter, and urban services.

Historically, until the advent of the jet airliner and the Interstate Highway System, the railroads had plenty of incentives to run fast, comfortable, affordable passenger trains, often at a significant loss: the losses were subsidized by mail and express revenue, and since those who made decisions on freight shipping rode passenger trains, the same as everybody else, fast passenger trains were the most effective way the railroads had to pitch their freight services. It was only in the 1960s and 1970s that passenger train losses became a problem for the railroads.

Amtrak was conceived as a way to maintain and improve passenger service, while relieving the railroads of their obligations to provide it. But as with any fair bargain, there was a price attached to that relief, and it was an entirely fair and reasonable one: passenger trains had to be given priority over freight trains, the same priority they had always had, and the tracks had to be maintained at a level consistent with passenger traffic.

As it stands, the railroads are getting an excellent deal: they avoid the losses inherent in running passenger trains, and they are able to reserve certain heavily used freight corridors, such as the Tehachapi Loop, for freight trains only (except under exceptional circumstances). But they need to be held to the standards of Amtrak's right of preference, as defined by Congress, not to some watered-down standard.

Members of the Surface Transportation Board:

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Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Frank

Last Name: Brice

Mailing Address: 152 Woodland Drive

City: Hurley

Country: United States

State or Province: NY

ZIP/Postal Code: 12443-6238

Email Address: frabric@verizon.net

Organization Name:

Comment: This proposed Policy Statement should be withdrawn. The concept of "preference" for Amtrak trains is well-established in the law, and has been re-affirmed by legislators over the years.

The law was originally written so that host railroads rescued by taxpayers in 1970 when Amtrak was created to relieve the host railroads of having to run passenger trains had to give passenger trains preference unless they could win an exemption by proving that preference for passenger trains would materially lessen the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers. This Policy Statement flips the burden of proof onto Amtrak, even though the law (49 U.S. Code Section 24308c) was written to put the burden of proof on host railroads.

Preference for Amtrak is crucial to on-time performance, and Amtrak must be given preference unless a freight railroad can prove that it cannot be done, according to existing law.

This proposed Policy Statement should be withdrawn. The concept of "preference" for Amtrak trains is well-established in the law, and has been re-affirmed by legislators over the years.

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RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Christopher
Last Name: Berresford
Mailing Address: 172 E 104th st apt 3D
City: New York
Country: United States
State or Province: NY
ZIP/Postal Code: 10029
Email Address: ccbny@yahoo.com
Organization Name:

Comment: Dear Members of the Surface Transportation Board,

My name is Christopher Berresford and I am a regular rider of Amtrak in the Northeast and systemwide. My most frequented stations are New York Penn, Philadelphia 30th Street, Miami, Savannah, and Chicago Union. I am commenting on Decision# 44619 Docket# EP 728 in regards to preference given to passenger trains, but as preference and on-time performance are closely related, I ask you also to attribute my comments to Decision# 44630 Docket# EP 726 to the full extent to which they are relevant.

Preference for passenger trains is essential not only for Amtrak's operations and customer satisfaction, but because of the basic fact that there are hundreds of human lives aboard, often in "the middle of nowhere" on long distance routes surrounded by miles of forest or desert where alternative means of transport, food and water, and emergency services are non-existent. If a train is held on the track for a long period of time, passengers are literally stranded without recourse. Passengers can plan ahead for slight delays, but I have heard stories of trains being delayed by over 18 hours, and I have personally experienced a train stranded in the woods of South Carolina for 11 hours enroute to Savannah. During these times, what if a passenger has a medical emergency, the train runs out of food or water, or an 8-months pregnant woman, unable to fly, goes into labor? Chaos would ensue and risk to passengers' health and safety would be significant. Unlike airports, where services are plentiful and where during lengthy tarmac delays a truck or ambulance can still reach the plane, passenger trains are self-sustaining bodies where, if they were to lose preference over freight trains, lengthy track delays would abound and the stranded passengers would be without options. Federal and state governments have passed laws regulating tarmac delays for air travel; given that a train cannot literally turn around and is often inaccessible by road, the only way to preserve passengers' rights and safety is to maintain passenger trains' current preference over freight trains.

Additionally I would like to comment on section 2 paragraph 1 of the Decision. I understand and agree with the difficulties of defining preference as "absolute". I also understand, but do not agree with, the Board's "systemic, global" approach to defining preference, and wish that a definition be drawn somewhere between the two, for example, that a certain percentage of passenger trains MUST be given preference during a certain period of time, a certain number of dispatches, or a certain geographical area. Also, in regards to the "materially lessen the quality of transportation" aspect of 49 U.S.C. 24308(c), I must insist that the law remain as it is. While the Decision does not directly state that the burden of proof should be reversed, if it is to be construed that way, I must staunchly disagree. Only the freight railroads can know the products they ship, and how they are affected by preference; if the burden of proof were to be shifted to Amtrak, how could they possibly prove that the quality of transportation of freight, carried by other railroads, were or were not "materially lessened"? To reverse the burden of proof in such a manner would be a legal subterfuge to

incapacitate Amtrak and perhaps pave the way for its demise.

In closing, Amtrak is essential to our Nation's people and economy. None of its current protections under the law must be diminished or stripped.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comment.

Sincerely,
Christopher C. Berresford

Dear Members of the Surface Transportation Board,

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Sincerely,
Christopher C. Berresford

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Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: John

Last Name: RePass

Mailing Address: 402 Glenmore Ave

City: Brooklyn

Country: United States

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code: 11207

Email Address: juven_29@yahoo.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I urge that the policy statement be withdrawn, since it's my understanding that it does not conforming to existing law which provides that preference should by default be given to passenger train traffic rather than freight shippers, unless the latter could prove that preference for passenger trains would materially lessen the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers. The proposed policy would reverse that, putting the burden of proof on Amtrak, in contravention of the way the law was written and the intent of the legislators who enacted it.

I urge that the policy statement be withdrawn, since it's my understanding that it does not conforming to existing law which provides that preference should by default be given to passenger train traffic rather than freight shippers, unless the latter could prove that preference for passenger trains would materially lessen the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers. The proposed policy would reverse that, putting the burden of proof on Amtrak, in contravention of the way the law was written and the intent of the legislators who enacted it.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Andrew

Last Name: Sisk

Mailing Address: 720 Angenette Ave

City: St Louis

Country: United States

State or Province: MO

ZIP/Postal Code: 63122-6222

Email Address: asisk@sbcglobal.net

Organization Name:

Comment: The original formation of Amtrak (NRPC) was as an agreement between the US Government and those railroads providing passenger service. Legislators created Amtrak as an exchange of responsibility: railroads could lose the (utility-like) responsibility of providing passenger service IF the federally operated passenger trains were given priority. Railroads even paid for the privilege of entering into this new responsibility. It was agreed upon as a contract with the legislative branch that cannot be abrogated by either courts or an unelected board.

The courts' challenge of passenger train preference over the host railroads' freight trains ignores the concept of civic responsibility. No one challenges the law that an individual driver must yield to an emergency vehicle "for the common good". It is an inconvenience that we live with as part of the privilege of living in this country. Likewise for freight trains yielding to passenger trains: it is a responsibility, not an onerous sacrifice.

Passenger trains having preference might in fact improve the overall "Surface Transportation" situation with which your Board is concerned. Here's how: delaying Amtrak passengers for the sake of freight trains will generate negative views of freight railroads. The public would be less inclined for federal money to be invested in the more efficient rail options. Thus, the US would be stuck with ever more congested, polluting, inefficient road based network. The only purpose that would serve is that of the concrete cartel.

The wisdom in Amtrak's original creation was as an attempt to restore some measure of balance to our passenger transportation, after grossly unbalancing it with the largest public works project in world history (the Interstate Highway system). Amtrak needs more authority, not less, to accomplish its charter. This entails guaranteed funding at much higher levels, most likely from a new federal gas tax. With this money, Amtrak could pay for track improvements and incentive payments to reduce any expenses caused to the railroads. Shame on us all if Amtrak is not thus empowered to bring efficiency to our transport network. In the meantime, Amtrak preference while on freight rails is a contractually agreed upon emergency solution.

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Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:
First Name: Susan
Last Name: Hadrous
Mailing Address: 518 Woodgate Circle
City: Sunrise
Country:
State or Province: Florida
ZIP/Postal Code: 33326
Email Address: susanhadrous@bellsouth.net
Organization Name:
Comment: Kinda sneaky, don't ya think?

I thought it was the lawmakers duty to handle this issue considering that they were the individuals who wrote and worked to get this bill passed. Now this Surface Transportation Board comes along appoints themselves supreme rulers of the universe and decide to issue their own "policy statements" without any input from any outside parties ???

Like I said kinda sneaky.

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Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: sally

Last Name: mccray

Mailing Address: 6815 Ripley Lane SE

City: Renton

Country: United States

State or Province: WA

ZIP/Postal Code: 98056

Email Address: order1@mccray.ws

Organization Name:

Comment: It is my opinion that that Amtrak should continue to be given preference in using the rails. This was the original intent in creating Amtrak, and it is only sensible that PEOPLE riding the rails be given preference over the special interests of commercial businesses. PEOPLE traveling by train means all of us, anyone who wishes to travel by train. The commercial interests benefit only a few.

PEOPLE will not be able to travel by train if the service is not on time. In this day and age, all of us have a schedule. We must meet other people at a certain time, we must be at our job at a certain time, we must make a connection in our travel plan at a certain time. If you allow for delays for freight, whenever a commercial business wants the right of way, you will make passenger travel a thing of the past. And ultimately, without passenger travel, the rails will become a thing of the past. They will not have public support.

It is wrong for the STB to change the interpretation of laws as passed by elected officials. Please uphold your duty and resist the temptation to bow down to the commercial interests who have paid employees to lobby and give you input and money to spend to make their point. Listen to the passengers who ride the rail and uphold our rights.

I travel as often as I can by rail to visit relatives and for vacation. I hope to do more rail travel. But it is impossible without a reliable and predictable travel schedule.

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Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Viva

Last Name: Horowitz

Mailing Address: 24 Pitman St

City: Somerville

Country:

State or Province: MA

ZIP/Postal Code: 02143

Email Address: vivarose564@yahoo.fr

Organization Name:

Comment: I am an Amtrak rider. I have lived in numerous places, including Santa Barbara, CA, where I earned my PhD in Physics and regularly traveled on the Pacific Surfliner, and soon I will be living in Utica, NY, where I will be a physics professor at Hamilton College and I expect to be riding the Empire Service train. Reliable, on-time performance is essential to travelling, especially by train.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Lauran

Last Name: Emerson

Mailing Address:

City:

Country: United States

State or Province: VT

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address: lauran.emerson@yahoo.com

Organization Name:

Comment: As a regular Amtrak passenger on several routes including the Northeast Corridor, Lakeshore Limited and Empire Builder, I've experienced many years of on-time service but several instances in the past few years of extremely late service due to freight traffic. The rules should be fair. Passenger rail should have equal or preferential passage compared to freight, which does not have to make connections. The route to more public support for trains is through providing on-time service.

Thank you.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:
First Name: Golden
Last Name: Powell
Mailing Address: 4306 Caswell Ave., Unit B
City: Austin
Country: United States
State or Province: TX
ZIP/Postal Code: 78751-3963
Email Address: g.wadepowell@gmail.com
Organization Name:
Comment: EP-~~726~~-0

728

I would like to urge the STB to withdraw the proposed policy statement. I am a frequent Amtrak rider, usually to or from my home station of Austin, Texas. Congestion on highways and at airports in Central Texas is one driving factor in my preference for travel by train. On-time passenger train performance is very important to me, particularly if I am traveling on a brief trip (to maximize the time I can spend with friends or family at my destination, or to make it back in time for work) or on longer trips which require a connection, such as those routed through Chicago. The proposed rules allow for 30 minutes late at endpoints; a consistent 10 minutes late for all stops would be a better rule.

Thank you for your consideration.

EP-~~726~~-0

728

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Robert

Last Name: Ellis

Mailing Address:

City: Prescott

Country:

State or Province: AZ

ZIP/Postal Code: 86301

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: Having an effective way to provide and measure meaningful preference to Amtrak train operations is critical to the traveling public. I regularly travel via Amtrak's long distance trains usually having to make connections en route.

Because there is generally only one long distance Amtrak train each way per day means a missed connection results in a 24 travel delay, usually involving an overnight stay at considerable expense to the affected Amtrak passengers.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Peter

Last Name: Henry

Mailing Address: 5710 Norton Rd

City: Alexandria

Country: United States

State or Province: VA

ZIP/Postal Code: 22303

Email Address: peterghenry@hotmail.com

Organization Name: None

Comment: Passenger trains should have preference over freight trains as was set up when Amtrak was founded. passenger service is only effective if one can rely on getting to their destination in a reasonable time frame. For example traveling from Washington, D.C. To Cumberland Maryland and back the return trip was scheduled to be 14 hours late which caused me to miss an important teaching assignment. I think that a delay of 10 minutes is acceptable but not 14 hours. Note that railroads were given land in exchange for providing passenger rail service. Now that they have neglected this responsibility and pushed it off on Amtrak they want nothing more than to kill passenger rail by making it endlessly latest. If they can't work with Amtrak then the Feds should take back the land the rails were built on. I ride the rails several times a year on distance trips. This year alone I have traveled from Washington to Chicago from Miami to Jacksonville and will be traveling from Alexandria VA to Asheville Nc. Each time I do I am not only paying more for my trip but also reducing the number of cars on the road. The least the government regulators can do is ensure that my trip is given priority over flats of lumber and hoppers of coal

Sincerely,
Peter Henry
Alexandria, Va

Peterghenry@hotmail.com

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Sincerely,
Peter Henry
Alexandria, Va

Peterghenry@hotmail.com

Please Do Not Reply To This Email.

Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: susan

Last Name: schaller

Mailing Address: 1442A Walnut St. #139

City: Berkeley

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code: 94709

Email Address: susan@susanschaller.com

Organization Name: susanschaller.com

Comment: Regarding Preference Provisions relating to ON-Time Performance

As a frequent rider of Amtrak, it is of great concern to me and my work, as a traveling public speaker and educator, that I am close to on time. Hosts from all over meet me at the train station or expect me soon after the scheduled arrival time. The policy as written now seems to put the original law upside down. Instead of host trains giving preference to passengers or proving it is a hardship, all the burden would be placed on Amtrak.

I strongly urge removal of this Policy Statement and returning to the spirit of the original law. The more we can think of ways to improve the passenger rail in this country, the more people will ride the train, a more ecological and friendly way to travel than airplanes. Since we have past peak oil, let us think of ways to save, such as the train. I trust you will see how this policy is not supporting the passenger rail service we want to build in this country.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Susan Schaller, author, traveling speaker and educator

currently in North Carolina, after riding three thousand miles seeing this beautiful country from train windows

Regarding Preference Provisions relating to ON-Time Performance

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Susan Schaller, author, traveling speaker and educator
currently in North Carolina, after riding three thousand miles seeing this beautiful country from train windows

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Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Robert

Last Name: Walz

Mailing Address:

City: Kansas City

Country: United States

State or Province: MO

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: I think it is vital that passenger trains should receive preference over freight trains when on the rails of private freight railroads. This principle was enshrined in the law that created amtrak. I have been on many Amtrak trains that have been stopped to let freight trains pass, sometimes for up to a couple of hours. This makes the train late and is just plain aggravating to the passengers, even when the train crew tells us why we are stopped. By not continuing this principle, the government is telling us that things matter more than people.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Todd

Last Name: Kinney

Mailing Address: 609 W Indiana Avenue

City: Urbana

Country: United States

State or Province: IL

ZIP/Postal Code: 61801

Email Address: mr.todd.kinney@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I am not in favor of the policy changes being proposed. I am an Amtrak rider, often using the train as my preferred mode of transportation between Champaign-Urbana, IL and Chicago, IL. Most trains that I ride on are full or nearly full on this segment. It is not unusual for these trains to experience delays because of freight trains taking precedence on the route. I am not in favor of policy changes that would make it even more likely that passenger trains will experience delays due to freight trains taking priority by default. As it is, I am not satisfied that host railroads are doing all they can to prioritize passenger traffic.

Our nation deserves a strong passenger rail system. Thank you for reviewing these comments.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Heather
Last Name: Bacon-Shone
Mailing Address: 6708 SW 12th Avenue
City: Portland
Country: United States
State or Province: OR
ZIP/Postal Code: 97219
Email Address: indyhealth@hotmail.com
Organization Name:

Comment: I am a regular Amtrak rider. Most recently, I was stationed in Norfolk, VA, for three years, and frequently rode the Norfolk-to-Washington DC route (and occasionally further north) for business and leisure purposes.

Thanks both to ongoing rail improvements and worsening traffic jams between the two cities, this is one of the few rail routes I'm aware of in the country where it really is just as fast - if not faster - to take the train than to drive. Thanks to great connections with public transit/Metro in DC, taking the train is a very convenient and affordable alternative to the mess of driving to and from DC. With the train's timing, and being able to work and sleep on the "quiet car" makes a single day up-and-back business trip to DC entirely feasible. I've convinced friends, family, and colleagues to make the switch as well!

That being said, it's very frustrating for all of us aboard the train when we're held up due to competing freight traffic. I know all of us would want a say if the laws change regarding freight-passenger rail sharing.

I ask that you do not move forward with this policy statement, because such an important issue affecting so many people should be discussed by our elected officials, not decided for all of us without our input. Thank you for your consideration.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: James
Last Name: Canavan
Mailing Address: 11 Park St Apt 8
City: Brookline
Country: United States
State or Province: MA
ZIP/Postal Code: 02446
Email Address: jim@dracanavan.com
Organization Name:

Comment: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule by the Surface Transportation Board on 12/28/2015 regarding the "Policy Statement on Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions of 49 U.S.C. 24308(c) and (f)".

I routinely travel on the Northeast Corridor between Boston and New York City for business and recreational purposes, and also use long-distance passenger rail services for recreational/vacation travel.

The proposed rule is an example of administrative overreach, as it was made without consultation or public testimony, while having the effect of a law or statutory instrument if promulgated.

Excellent on-time performance is required to make Amtrak services competitive with other modes of transport, and to ensure that passenger rail continues to contribute to the economic health and development of the United States. The proposed rule intends to measure on-time performance only at the endpoint of scheduled services, not at intermediate stations. This means that on-time performance data will not be considered for 90% of Amtrak stations, which will have the effect of weakening the regulatory requirement for host railroads to ensure that passenger trains have preference over freight movements, and will dramatically reduce the level of service (and subsequently, ridership) in these areas. This will not only affect the quality and service of long-distance services, but also services in the Northeastern Corridor.

For the reasons stated above, the STB should not be allowed to promulgate a policy position that would weaken the on-time performance of Amtrak trains, which would have the effect of decreasing their attractiveness as a mode of transportation, which would jeopardize their ridership and severely affect both business and recreational riders.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Terry

Last Name: Fox

Mailing Address: 309 Hemingway Road

City: Louisville

Country: United States

State or Province: KY

ZIP/Postal Code: 40207-4016

Email Address: terryefox@att.net

Organization Name:

Comment: I read with great interest the full text of your decision on December 28, 2015 in case # EP 728.

Since you would not see the humor in my first reaction to your "learned" opinion, my comment will focus on my second reaction, after I repaired the hole in the ceiling in my house.

I respectfully, but most strenuously disagree with your "decision". I am a retired attorney, student of the law, and a user of this country's rail system, whose interest you have a professional duty to protect.

In summary, your opinion states that you don't know what the word "preference" means, you don't believe that anyone else knows what "preference" means, and therefore you will presume to "guide" the entire world with what you think "preference" means.

Why does anyone need "guidance" on the meaning of a word from a body that begins its opinion by stating that it doesn't know what the word means? Are you sure that in another life you weren't the author of Regina v. Ojibway (1966)?

Merriam-Webster gives the common definitions of the word "preference" as follows:

1. "an advantage that is given to some things but not to others"
2. "the act, fact, or principle of giving advantages to some over others"
3. "priority in the right to demand and receive satisfaction of an obligation".

My edition of Black's Law Dictionary defines "preference" as follows:

"the right held by a creditor, in virtue of some lien or security, to be preferred above others (i.e., paid first) out of the debtor's assets constituting the fund for creditors". Likewise the related word "preferred" is defined by Black's as follows:

"Possessing or according a priority, advantage, or privilege. Generally denoting a prior or superior claim or right of payment as against another thing of the same kind or class."

I am very sorry, but respectfully, the word "preference" is not ambiguous, and no one (except perhaps this learned board) is in need of "guidance" as to its meaning.

However, assuming that there were some ambiguity as to the word's meaning, railroad history conclusively establishes that Congress intended that passenger trains receive priority over freight trains.

Prior to the 1970s, the United States had real railroads carrying passengers and freight. The railroads begged Congress to be relieved of their obligation to carry passengers. Congress allowed the railroads to become freight railroads on condition that passenger trains be allowed to use the new freight railroad rails and also receive a priority over freight trains. Now the freight railroads want to welsh on the bargain and are hoping that everyone will forget their deal and the purpose that Congress intended.

Finally, this Board should review its "guidance" because the practical effect of the guidance is to require Amtrak to prove a negative, which this board should know is impossible. The practical effect of this Board's "guidance" will be to repeal an Act of Congress requiring "preference" be given to passenger trains. Respectfully, if this decision stands, this Board should fall.

Respectfully, this Board should withdraw its improvident decision to offer "guidance" as to the meaning of the word "preference".
Respectfully submitted.

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Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: David

Last Name: Bowie

Mailing Address:

City: Anchorage

Country: United States

State or Province: AK

ZIP/Postal Code: 99405

Email Address: db.www@pmpkn.net

Organization Name:

Comment: I am an occasional Amtrak rider; I live in Alaska, which has no Amtrak service, but when I travel to the lower 48 for business or to visit family I often travel on Amtrak, generally on the Northeast Corridor but occasionally using longer-distance trains (particularly in the US southeast).

The option to ride passenger trains is important to me, because it offers me options when I travel, particularly giving me the ability to not have to drive somewhere while I'm jet-lagged or otherwise overly tired, so I see it as a safety issue for me and those around me.

On-time passenger rail service is quite important to me, because late trains may mean that I may be late for a meeting, or have less time to visit family. Therefore, I would like to state my opposition to any policy that would loosen the definition of what counts as on-time performance, or would eliminate accounting for on-time performance at intermediate stations.

I do recognize that events may occur en route that affect on-time performance, but I believe that a 10-minute allowance for late arrival to still count as on time is reasonable, and should be the standard for every station stop.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Susan

Last Name: Ashdown

Mailing Address: 12 Forest Lane

City: Ithaca

Country: United States

State or Province: NY

ZIP/Postal Code: 14850

Email Address: spa4@cornell.edu

Organization Name: Cornell University

Comment: I am a regular rider of Amtrak. I believe that effective passenger train travel is a critically important option for Americans as it allows us to travel in a more sustainable manner than any other transportation mode. Trains are very important to me. I normally travel from the Syracuse station, and have traveled on most of the routes connecting from NYC. The period when freight trains were given control of the rails over passenger trains was devastating to me as a regular rider, as I could not rely on the train to get me to my destination in a timely manner.

Currently the rules set by my elected officials in Congress require host railroads to give passenger trains preference on the rails unless the host railroad proves that preference for passenger trains would materially lessen the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers, as is expressed in law 49 U.S. Code Section 24308c. I believe that this policy statement proposed by STB should be withdrawn, because it changes what law says and how the law is applied from the intention of Congress, removing the burden of proof from the host railroad where it belongs.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Jonathan
Last Name: St.Mary
Mailing Address: 35 Shore Drive
City: Freeport
Country: United States
State or Province: ME
ZIP/Postal Code: 04032
Email Address: jonathan.st.mary@gmail.com
Organization Name:

Comment: The law was originally written so that host railroads essentially rescued by taxpayers in 1970 when Amtrak was created to relieve the host railroads of having to run passenger trains had to give passenger trains preference unless they could win an exemption by proving that preference for passenger trains would materially lessen the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers. That policy should remain in place. Further, On Time Performance should be defined as no more than 10 minutes late at any scheduled stop from the start of a run to the end point, including all intermediate stops. Often connections have to be made, appointments kept, etc. Passenger trains should have to meet their published schedules, without interference from freight of other host railroad situations.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Dexter

Last Name: Jeannotte

Mailing Address: 74 Bostock Road

City: Shokan

Country: United States

State or Province: NY

ZIP/Postal Code: 12481

Email Address: dexter3003j@earthlink.net

Organization Name:

Comment: I believe that Amtrak trains should be given preference over freight traffic to insure on-time performance. When the railroads were relieved of significant amounts of pension debt, labor costs, and litigation costs for train-off petitions in the deal to create Amtrak, they essentially leased a portion of their track capacity to Amtrak. Their payment for this lease was their relief from these future expenses. The condition for this transaction was that passenger traffic shall continue to be treated as priority traffic with regard to freight traffic. The only thing that has changed is that the railroads find themselves capacity constrained because they have not built capacity for their freight traffic and now want to take the capacity they sold to Amtrak and resell it to their freight customers. This seems to me to be fraudulent on the part of the railroads.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: MITCHELL

Last Name: AGLOW

Mailing Address: 11-13 ASPEN WAY

City: DOYLESTOWN

Country: United States

State or Province: PA

ZIP/Postal Code: 18901-2744

Email Address: miainbucks@comcast.net

Organization Name:

Comment: By far the best and most reliable means of intercity travel, in good weather and bad, is passenger trains. No parking problems, comfortable rides where one can prepare for the work day, less traffic congestion and a better impact on the environment.

By far the best and most reliable means of intercity travel, in good weather and bad, is passenger trains. No parking problems, comfortable rides where one can prepare for the work day, less traffic congestion and a better impact on the environment.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Kathy

Last Name: Shannon

Mailing Address: 2207 O DONNELL DR

City: CHAMPAIGN

Country: United States

State or Province: IL

ZIP/Postal Code: 61821

Email Address: kshannon617@comcast.net

Organization Name:

Comment: I ride Amtrak several times each year. I usually travel from Champaign, Illinois, which is not an end-point of any line. On time trains are VERY important to me! I would probably ride twice as often if the trains weren't late almost every day. It is so hard to guarantee that I will arrive in time to make any connections in Chicago. I believe that almost all our problems with train delays in Illinois are due to Canadian National's atrocious obstruction of the tracks. Our elected officials have worked hard to push them to fulfill their legal obligations, but your proposal would make it even more difficult to force CN to do that. Please withdraw your policy statement changing the burden of proof on preference.

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Please Do Not Reply To This Email.

Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Jacob
Last Name: Hugart
Mailing Address: 522 Wheelock Pkwy W
City: St Paul
Country: United States
State or Province: MN
ZIP/Postal Code: 55117
Email Address: jhugart@gmail.com
Organization Name:

Comment: I am an Amtrak-riding citizen who rides the busy Empire Builder route between Saint Paul, MN, and northern Illinois.

My understanding is that part of Amtrak's difficulty with on-time performance stems from resistance by the freight railroads to giving preference to passenger trains. It was required for the freight railroads to prove they would be adversely affected by a passenger-trains-first preference, and this has been supported by subsequent legislation and court cases.

Legislation that would place the burden of proof on Amtrak instead seems to be an unfunded mandate. Will Congress supply money for the personnel required to do the analysis? Will there be fines if the freight railroads don't provide the information needed for an analysis?

The United States should be a world leader in passenger railway transportation, but we are not. Other regions of the planet demonstrate a greater capability, and a country the size of ours definitely can use cross-country railroads. Affirming the responsibility of freight railroads to give priority to passenger trains is a step in this direction.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Robert
Last Name: Downs
Mailing Address: 36 Gould Road
City: Bedford
Country: United States
State or Province: MA
ZIP/Postal Code: 01730
Email Address:
Organization Name:

Comment:

We believe that the freight railroads should be held to their legal requirement to provide priority to Amtrak trains on their routes as required by the original laws passed by Congress to establish Amtrak.

We believe that the freight railroads should continue to carry the burden of proof for any exceptions to this requirement because they have the operational knowledge and control of operations on their routes and therefore can best achieve the original goals of Congress.

Recent experience (especially with Norfolk Southern) shows that when the STB holds the freight railroads to their obligations the Amtrak schedules are more faithfully maintained. This indicates that there is no undue burden to the freight railroads for providing priority.

We have experienced many delays on Amtrak trains due to freight rail freight congestion and maintenance. The country needs Amtrak as a viable alternative to other modes of transportation which are not available or affordable to many citizens.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Susan

Last Name: Norman

Mailing Address: 1516 N. E. Jarrett Street

City: Portland

Country: United States

State or Province: OR

ZIP/Postal Code: 97211

Email Address: snormanths70@hotmail.com

Organization Name: Business&Pleasure Travel

Comment: The ratio of freight over passenger trains (especially in the lower density urban and rural areas where I use rail transportation) is significant. Giving passenger trains preference to manage schedules better is a necessary policy change and must be implemented with regulations that make the rules effective. There will always be a need to share the tracks; even when our hopes for additional rails are realized and that would be the definitive example of the best use and value of trains . . both for people and goods transportation across our great and large nation.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: William R

Last Name: Vogel

Mailing Address: PO Box 68121

City: Seattle

Country: United States

State or Province: WA

ZIP/Postal Code: 98168-0121

Email Address: hightrailrider@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I travel Amtrak out of Seattle, King Street or Tukwilla, for enjoyment and because it fuel efficient. Although I travel for leisure, on-time performance is important in order to make connections and honor reservations.

My trains have been as much as eight hours late due to freight traffic. Passenger rail is an important part of our national transportation infrastructure; poor on-time performance does not attract passengers.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: JOHN

Last Name: MAYBURY

Mailing Address:

City:

Country:

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: I frequently ride Amtrak cross-country and up and down the West Coast, and I believe the only real problem is not giving passenger rail priority over freight, as they do in Europe. Please give Amtrak a green light all the way through. Let the freight trains wait their turn.

I frequently ride Amtrak cross-country and up and down the West Coast, and I believe the only real problem is not giving passenger rail priority over freight, as they do in Europe. Please give Amtrak a green light all the way through. Let the freight trains wait their turn.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Rosanna

Last Name: Falabella

Mailing Address:

City:

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: I respectfully submit the following comments regarding a proposed STB policy to require Amtrak to shoulder the burden of proof in cases where a host railroad fails to give preference to passenger trains and then claims that the quality of freight transportation was the reason.

The law was originally written so that host railroads had to give passenger trains preference unless they could win an exemption by proving that preference for passenger trains would materially lessen the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers. Flipping the burden of proof on to Amtrak violates the spirit and letter of the existing statutes. 49 U.S. Code Section 24308c was written to put the burden of proof on host railroads.

I believe that if the policy is re-written, the host railroads will have little incentive to fulfill their obligations to passenger rail, and Amtrak will need to spend its own precious resources in pursuing the host railroads to get the preferences that they deserve.

Please do not implement this policy. As an Amtrak rider and tax payer, I urge you to make it easier for Amtrak to operate and gain ridership, not the opposite.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: John

Last Name: Campbell

Mailing Address:

City: Alvaton

Country: United States

State or Province: KY

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: I am an Amtrak rider and I believe that Amtrak should continue to have preferential priority on all host (freight) railroads as it currently exists.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Christopher

Last Name: Stanly

Mailing Address: P.O. BOX 16351

City: Kansas City

Country:

State or Province: Mo.

ZIP/Postal Code: 64112-6351

Email Address: CSTANLY@KC.RR.COM

Organization Name:

Comment: I do prefer to ride the train-(Amtrak)-for traveling as it is more relaxing and enjoyable way to travel. When I first traveling by train-(1985)-there were very few people on the train. Now, it is always, completely full, AND HAS BEEN for several years, since at least the late 1990's.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: James

Last Name: Toy

Mailing Address:

City: Seaside

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code: 93955

Email Address: ToylandMRY@aol.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I have been an Amtrak rider on and off since 1974. Almost all of my trips have been on the Coast Starlight, plus one round trip on the California Zephyr.

As a student in the 1970s I rode the Starlight between my home in Salem, Oregon and a boarding school near the San Francisco Bay Area. In recent years I have taken many trips from my current home on the Monterey Peninsula via the Salinas Amtrak station to visit family who still live in Salem. Since Salem does not have scheduled airline service, Amtrak is the most convenient and cost-effective way to travel between Salinas and Salem.

Over the course of those 40 years I have become all too familiar with Amtrak delays, mostly caused by the host railroads. It astonishes me that a permanent solution to these delays has not yet been found in all that time. Thus I find it disturbing that your agency is planning to change its long-standing policy that requires host railroads to give priority to Amtrak trains over freight trains. I fear such a policy change which will make Amtrak delays even worse, cause great inconvenience to travelers, and degrade Amtrak's reputation through on fault of its own.

Please REJECT the proposed policy changes!

I have been an Amtrak rider on and off since 1974. Almost all of my trips have been on the Coast Starlight, plus one round trip on the California Zephyr.

As a student in the 1970s I rode the Starlight between my home in Salem, Oregon and a boarding school near the San Francisco Bay Area. In recent years I have taken many trips from my current home on the Monterey Peninsula via the Salinas Amtrak station to visit family who still live in Salem. Since Salem does not have scheduled airline service, Amtrak is the most convenient and cost-effective way to travel between Salinas and Salem.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Lawrence and Linda

Last Name: DiNardo

Mailing Address: 22 Birchwood Road

City: Hanover

Country: United States

State or Province: MA

ZIP/Postal Code: 02339

Email Address: lldinardo@comcast.net

Organization Name: Amtrak Rider

Comment: I am a frequent Amtrak passenger from Boston to Ann Arbor and to Washington, DC.

The single biggest cause of delay of Amtrak trains is freight train interference.

If Amtrak trains are not given general priority over slow moving freight trains, it makes reliable train travel impossible and ultimately discourages train travel since arrival and departure times become unreliable.

If the Amtrak passenger train priority is ended, it will be the beginning of the end of the resurgence in train travel in the United States and force everyone back to the highway and airports.

Please do not do away with the Amtrak priority which would spell the demise of train travel for American.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Elliott

Last Name: Harris

Mailing Address: 118 Milwaukee

City: Lawson

Country: United States

State or Province: MO

ZIP/Postal Code: 64062

Email Address: hhfoxtrot@centurylink.net

Organization Name: hhfoxtrot@centurylink.net

Comment: The proposed change violates existing Federal law (Title 49 U.S. Code Sec. 24308c). This law was passed by Congress more than 30 years ago. Only Congress has the authority to change it. The STB does not. They are overreaching.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Alexander G

Last Name: Frew

Mailing Address: 31200 Landau Blvd, Apt 1803

City: Cathedral City

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code: 92234-5271

Email Address: algfrew@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I live in Cathedral City, CA and my most frequent route of travel is to Tacoma, WA to assist with the ongoing care of my elderly mother who has advanced dementia.

Amtrak service only operates 3 days per week and arrives in Palm Springs, CA in the middle of the night enroute to and from Los Angeles. It is habitually late which requires standing outside on a concrete platform which serves as an 'Amtrak station'. It usually means missing my connection in Los Angeles; this poor 'on time' performance has meant passenger rail travel is no longer a viable option.

I propose you withdraw this 'policy statement' since the 'right of preference' has already been established in laws by Congress and the courts. Many times in the 20+ years I have been traveling by Amtrak it has been clear that our delays were caused by the failure of the freight companies to comply with the law and to respect the right of passenger trains to have preference over commodity freight trains.

It is common perception among rail passengers that freight companies blatantly disregard these laws but Amtrak is powerless to improve their performance when they do not have the power to challenge freight companies.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Benjamin

Last Name: Kay

Mailing Address: 4131 Laclede Avenue, FL1

City: St. Louis

Country: United States

State or Province: MO

ZIP/Postal Code: 63108

Email Address: benjamin@benkay.net

Organization Name:

Comment: The proposed policy statement seeks to clarify the process by which it may be determined whether a host railroad is providing the legally required preference to passenger Amtrak service. The policy statement correctly notes that making such a determination is complex because preference for passenger traffic "...need not resolve every individual dispatching decision between freight and passenger movements in favor of the passenger train." It is precisely because of this complexity that the process for Amtrak to obtain relief should be simple. As currently written, the policy unreasonably places the burden of evidence on Amtrak. If Amtrak seeks relief for poor on-time performance attributable to freight interference, the fact of this poor on-time performance should ipso facto be sufficient evidence that the host railroad has failed to meet its legal obligation for preference. The burden of proving mitigating circumstances such as those enumerated in the policy statement (e.g. failure of one host railroad to provide timely interchange of passenger traffic to the second host railroad) should then fall upon the host railroad. To require otherwise diffuses responsibility for delays within a complex bureaucratic process and a patchwork of multiple host railroads.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Jack

Last Name: Webb

Mailing Address: 11135 Shortmeadow Dr

City: Dallas

Country: United States

State or Province: TX

ZIP/Postal Code: 75218

Email Address: thewigwag@sbcglobal.net

Organization Name:

Comment: To Whom it may concern:

I utilize Amtrak to travel from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City and San Antonio primarily for business. The on-time performance of these services should be taken into consideration when assessing whether or not to continue to allow "passenger" trains to receive priority over "freight" train movements. I hope that serious consideration is given to this issue before a decision is rendered. In the event that the freight operators are given an opportunity to lower the rather limited priority currently given to passenger operations, the entire passenger rail industry will be further diminished with less chance of regaining any type of travel market share. Realizing that this is not as significant of an issue under the current economic conditions, we should review the increased ridership numbers when fuel prices were peaking in the recent past. Please give careful consideration to any issues that will further diminish the on-time performance of trains and the potential to compete with other transportation modes in the near future. We will pay for our poor decisions regarding rail transportation long term if these issues aren't addressed appropriately now. Thank you for your consideration of these issues.

JWW

To Whom it may concern:

I utilize Amtrak to travel from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City and San Antonio primarily for business. The on-time performance of these services should be taken into consideration when assessing whether or not to continue to allow "passenger" trains to receive priority over "freight" train movements. I hope that serious consideration is given to this issue before a decision is rendered. In the event that the freight operators are given an opportunity to lower the rather limited priority currently given to passenger operations, the entire passenger rail industry will be further diminished with less chance of regaining any type of travel market share. Realizing that this is not as significant of an issue under the current economic conditions, we should review the increased ridership numbers when fuel prices were peaking in the recent past. Please give careful consideration to any issues that will further diminish the on-time performance of trains and the potential to compete with other transportation modes in the near future. We will pay for our poor decisions regarding rail transportation long term if these issues aren't addressed appropriately now. Thank you for your consideration of these issues.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Eric

Last Name: Haas

Mailing Address:

City:

Country:

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: I am writing to urge the proposed policy statement be withdrawn as it effectively changes the interperation of agreements from the 1970s regarding host railroads responsibilities to handle Amtrak trains, all without public comment or action of elected officials. If the original agreements are to be modified, it should be done in a transparent way where people like myself who rely on Amtrak can provide input. Thank you for considering my comments.

Best Regards,

Eric

I am writing to urge the proposed policy statement be withdrawn as it effectively changes the interperation of agreements from the 1970s regarding host railroads responsibilities to handle Amtrak trains, all without public comment or action of elected officials. If the original agreements are to be modified, it should be done in a transparent way where people like myself who rely on Amtrak can provide input. Thank you for considering my comments.

Best Regards,

Eric

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Janice
Last Name: Elliott
Mailing Address: 2216 County Road 529
City: Burleson
Country: United States
State or Province: TX
ZIP/Postal Code: 76028
Email Address: janice.elliott.tx@gmail.com
Organization Name: Mrs.

Comment: I am a frequent Amtrak customer, and so is my family (in Fort Worth Texas), and so is my sister and her family (in Oklahoma City). We have depended on the Amtrak to avoid dangerous highway travel for our families. The whole point of the railroad for shipping is to get the dangerous trucks off of the road. There are still dangerous trucks on the road, albeit necessary in many cases. And we take the Amtrak to get out of the way of these trucks. The trucks tear up the highways and smaller roads in Oklahoma and Texas. The railway is absolutely necessary for decreasing truck activity on the highways. In my opinion, when riding the Amtrak, the Amtrak system always respects the main railways as a provider of the rail to and from Fort Worth/Oklahoma City. There needs to be an increase in the number of cars that Amtrak pulls, often the train is sold out. If there were some marketing dollars spent to build the daily ridership, special promotions offered by Amtrak for the lighter days, I believe that the cars would fill daily. Buses are necessary, trains are necessary and cars are necessary for travel for citizens. Please support the Amtrak.

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Please Do Not Reply To This Email.

Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Martha
Last Name: Easter-Wells
Mailing Address: 22905 Great River Road
City: LeClaire
Country: United States
State or Province: IA
ZIP/Postal Code: 52753
Email Address: mm3second@aol.com
Organization Name: none

Comment: I ride Amtrak's long distance trains frequently, most often from the Galesburg, IL station. Riding trains is my preferred mode of transportation.

I am writing to state my opinion host railroads should be required to provide preference to passenger trains as required by Congress and affirmed by courts. The burden should not be on the passenger trains to prove that a host railroad's requirement to provide preference materially lessens the quality of freight transportation.

Those who ride passenger trains need to be able to plan on the schedule of the trains. Without putting a requirement on the host railroads to give preference to the passenger trains, they can fall into a habit of putting the passenger trains off on a siding and not even trying to get them through in any sort of a timely manner.

When a particular passenger train route is delayed day after day by a recalcitrant host railroad, there needs to be some leverage for requiring them to improve their efforts in accommodating the passenger trains.

Please withdraw this proposed policy. Thank you.

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I am writing to state my opinion host railroads should be required to provide preference to passenger trains as required by Congress and affirmed by courts. The burden should not be on the passenger trains to prove that a host railroad's requirement to provide preference materially lessens the quality of freight transportation.

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Please withdraw this proposed policy. Thank you.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Bobo

Last Name: Tanner

Mailing Address: 2105 Hampton Ave

City: Nashville

Country: United States

State or Province: TN

ZIP/Postal Code: 37215

Email Address: bobo.tanner@vanderbilt.edu

Organization Name:

Comment: I travel from Essex Junction Vermont and I rely on the train service to be on time and honest about its management. I do not think that the surface transportation board should have the ability to issue a Policy Statement on how it will view the need for a right to preference without any input from any outside parties.This breaks down the integrity of the public and its reliance on an honest surface transportation board.

I travel from Essex Junction Vermont and I rely on the train service to be on time and honest about its management. I do not think that the surface transportation board should have the ability to issue a Policy Statement on how it will view the need for a right to preference without any input from any outside parties.This breaks down the integrity of the public and its reliance on an honest surface transportation board.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Claudia

Last Name: Detwiler

Mailing Address: 5723 Solway Street

City: Pittsburgh

Country: United States

State or Province: PA

ZIP/Postal Code: 15217

Email Address: cdetwil@earthlink.net

Organization Name:

Comment: My husband and I travel from Pittsburgh to Denver by way of Chicago 3-4 times a year and from Pittsburgh to New York and/or Washington 1-2 times a year. Passenger travel should have preference on railroads. Public subsidies for railroads should primarily benefit passenger travel and not corporations.

On our trips we see many young families and older people who are being met in the middle of the night in small towns by friends and family. The lengthy delays due to deference to freight trains is a hardship on both the travelers and those coming to meet them, who are often waiting in inclement weather.

We oppose any attempts to give preference to freight traffic by behind-the-scenes policies.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Stephen

Last Name: Williams

Mailing Address:

City:

Country:

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: Please make sure passenger trains run on time. It is very frustrating to think that a train is going to arrive on time but when you get to the station the train is running late which in turn makes you late to your destination. It is very important to make sure a passenger arrives at their destination on time.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: REG

Last Name: HOLMES

Mailing Address: 5500 E PEAKVIEW AVE #1323

City: CENTENNIAL

Country: United States

State or Province: CO

ZIP/Postal Code: 80121

Email Address: REGDADPP@YAHOO.COM

Organization Name:

Comment: I am a frequent Amtrak rider and have been since the beginning of Amtrak in 1971. Sometimes it seems that the freight railroads forget that Amtrak saved them from the expense of seeking further discontinuance requests when it was created. They have not always given Amtrak the priority passage that is mandated by law. It is not the priority which should be changed here, but rather the failure to insure that Amtrak be given the priority that has always been intended since its creation. Please honor the continuance of the law as is only right and proper as well as long overdue in many cases.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: REG

Last Name: HOLMES

Mailing Address: 5500 E PEAKVIEW AVE #1323

City: CENTENNIAL

Country: United States

State or Province: CO

ZIP/Postal Code: 80121

Email Address: REGDADPP@YAHOO.COM

Organization Name:

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Tony
Last Name: Shotwell
Mailing Address: 309 NE 31st Street
City: Grand Prairie
Country: United States
State or Province: TX
ZIP/Postal Code: 75050
Email Address: tonys96@yahoo.com
Organization Name:

Comment: Passenger rail should continue to receive priority for several reasons, most importantly the need for a common carrier to be able to operate efficiently. I f freight lines control the priority, passenger rail will be at the very bottom of the list and OTP will suffer greatly.

Freight rail gets the power of eminent domain, full rights to all at grade crossing operations, and should do something that is for the COMMON good, to continue getting these priorities from the general population.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Paul

Last Name: Lubell

Mailing Address: 2305 Rockwell Ave

City: Catonsville

Country: United States

State or Province: MD

ZIP/Postal Code: 21228

Email Address: pdl38@columbia.edu

Organization Name:

Comment: The legislation enabling Amtrak in 1970 provided that passenger trains run by Amtrak should be given preference over freight trains on all railroads with Amtrak service. An exception would be provided only if the railroad could prove a hardship. The proposed rule-making reverses the process and would require Amtrak to demonstrate that it was not imposing a hardship on the railroad. As a practical matter, this would eliminate all passenger train preferences. This would cause increasing delays to the traveling public and is contrary to the enabling legislation and subsequent court interpretation. The proposed rule-making and should be rescinded.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Kent

Last Name: Motoyama

Mailing Address:

City:

Country:

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: I am a regular Amtrak rider and am asking you to please withdraw this "policy statement" regarding preference. Host railroads should hold the burden of proof as was intended by the original law, and subsequently upheld by the courts. Lawmakers elected by the people are the only ones who should be allowed to change it. I travel on the Northeast Regional as well as many other long distance routes. Most of the delays I have experienced were because of host railroads having freight priority over Amtrak's transporting of people. This policy statement will make it even more difficult for Amtrak to serve Americans properly.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

I am a regular Amtrak rider and am asking you to please withdraw this "policy statement" regarding preference. Host railroads should hold the burden of proof as was intended by the original law, and subsequently upheld by the courts. Lawmakers elected by the people are the only ones who should be allowed to change it. I travel on the Northeast Regional as well as many other long distance routes. Most of the delays I have experienced were because of host railroads having freight priority over Amtrak's transporting of people. This policy statement will make it even more difficult for Amtrak to serve Americans properly.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Kevin

Last Name: Burton

Mailing Address:

City: Los Angeles

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code: 90046

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: I am an Amtrak user who rides trains from Los Angeles to points east, north and south for business and to visit family and friends. It is extremely important that the trains depart from each station on time so that I can time my arrival at the departure station appropriately and meet people who are picking me up or make travel connections at the arrival station. As interference from freight rail is the greatest contributor to delays on Amtrak trains, I urge the Board to withdraw this policy statement, which in it's treatment of the preference for Amtrak trains over freight rail on shared tracks conflicts with previous interpretations of federal law. This includes its revision of current policy that a host railroad must give passenger trains preference unless they can prove that doing so materially lessens the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers.

I am an Amtrak user who rides trains from Los Angeles to points east, north and south for business and to visit family and friends. It is extremely important that the trains depart from each station on time so that I can time my arrival at the departure station appropriately and meet people who are picking me up or make travel connections at the arrival station. As interference from freight rail is the greatest contributor to delays on Amtrak trains, I urge the Board to withdraw this policy statement, which in it's treatment of the preference for Amtrak trains over freight rail on shared tracks conflicts with previous interpretations of federal law. This includes its revision of current policy that a host railroad must give passenger trains preference unless they can prove that doing so materially lessens the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Daniel

Last Name: van Schooneveld

Mailing Address:

City:

Country:

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: This policy statement goes against the intent of the underlying legislation by shifting the burden of proof regarding passenger preference over freight from the freight railways to Amtrak. The consequence of this shift would be to give freight railways additional leeway to delay passenger trains by disincentivizing compliance with legislation. In addition, Amtrak's administrative workload would substantially increase.

As a passenger on many trains, on-time performance has always mattered to me and has occasionally been crucial. As a taxpayer and a citizen, I demand efficiency in government. The result of this statement would be a disservice to the public, by increasing delays and reducing dependability for the traveling public, and by forcing needless government expenditure.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Thomas

Last Name: Tabatowski

Mailing Address: 544 Oak St

City: Madison

Country: United States

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code: 53704

Email Address: tommyenko@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: As a rail passenger whose travel plans unfortunately must include allowances for train delays, I urge the Board to reconsider its understanding of "preference" for passenger trains. 49 U.S.C. 24308 seems unambiguous in requiring that host railroads carry the burden of demonstrating that granting preference to passenger trains would "materially ... lessen the quality of freight transportation," and I hope that the Board will bear this in mind when formulating its policy.

As a rail passenger whose travel plans unfortunately must include allowances for train delays, I urge the Board to reconsider its understanding of "preference" for passenger trains. 49 U.S.C. 24308 seems unambiguous in requiring that host railroads carry the burden of demonstrating that granting preference to passenger trains would "materially ... lessen the quality of freight transportation," and I hope that the Board will bear this in mind when formulating its policy.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Clarise

Last Name: Patton

Mailing Address: 247 Laws Brook Rd Apt 211

City: Concord

Country: United States

State or Province: MA

ZIP/Postal Code: 01742

Email Address: ClarisePatton@hotmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: In order to have anything close to a true national passage railroad it is absolutely necessary that Amtrak continue to have its preference over freight on the many host railroads. It is important that it is the freight railroads that be held accountable and on whom the burden of proof of delays is laid.

Since I retired in 2001 I have preferred to travel by rail. I have traveled from NY and MA to Washington State, to California, to New Orleans, to Florida (and hopefully back) for 15 years.

I can't count the number of times my train has sat on a siding for ridiculous amounts of time while freight after freight have gone by. In fact for a while getting through North Dakota was basically impossible.

I normally have connections to make and getting in 8 hours late will do a real job on that!

The government needs to give a priority to a national passenger rail rather than trying to kill it by a thousand cuts. We are an embarrassment in an international environment where railroads are respected. AND NEEDED.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:
First Name: John
Last Name: Hosken
Mailing Address: 69 Payson Rd
City: Chestnut Hill
Country: United States
State or Province: MA
ZIP/Postal Code: 02467
Email Address: John.Hosken@usa.net
Organization Name:
Comment: To whom it may concern:

I urge you to withdraw or reverse this "Policy Statement".

I believe passenger traffic should have preference over freight as is guaranteed under the laws currently in effect. When a party, in this case a railroad, is required to provide a certain quality of service, the party entitled to receive the service, passengers served and represented by Amtrak, should not have to prove the provider is not entitled to an exemption. The party who wishes to receive the exemption should have to prove they are entitled to it, especially as the exemption in this case is subjective and vague. For example, I do not see where "materially lessen" is defined in detail. Amtrak would repeatedly incur great expense researching and proving that nobody could be harmed by actions of railroads they do not control and that therefore the railroads are not newly entitled to a broad exemption every time a small circumstance on the ground changes. This ongoing expense would inevitably be borne by passengers as fare increases. Passengers would collectively be required to pay extra to receive what should be standard service. The railroads have consistently and collectively refused to provide service a reasonable person would consider compliant with the law or even customary. They have stalled implementation of the law for years at a time, causing harm to passengers and to Amtrak's brand and reputation.

I usually travel on Amtrak for pleasure but also sometimes for business. I live in Chestnut Hill, MA so I most often leave from Route 128 (RTE). When on the on the west coast I most often leave from San Luis Obispo (SLO). I have ridden the Coast Starlight, the Empire Builder, the Lake Shore Limited, the Downeaster, the Acela Express and the Northeast Regional. On-time arrival is very important to me as I am often in a time-constrained situation, for example, when travelling to New York to see a show. Railroads should not have interrupted an otherwise wonderful cross-country vacation by repeatedly forcing me to sit on a siding for hours.

Thanks in advance for your consideration,
John Hosken

To whom it may concern:

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Thanks in advance for your consideration,
John Hosken

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Geoffrey

Last Name: Lacina

Mailing Address: 10211 S Prospect Ave

City: Chicago

Country: United States

State or Province: IL

ZIP/Postal Code: 60643

Email Address: glacinarail@yahoo.com

Organization Name:

Comment: There needs to be a formal statute which gives preference to passenger trains over Freight Trains. Users of Intercity travel of any means rely on arriving at their destination at the time specified by the schedule. This time is measured in minutes by the travelling public. Freight Traffic has a much larger leeway of expected arrival. It is usually measured in days.

In order from transportation of any goods from people to pork to be successful it must be on time. People are more vocal than pigs and are more likely to choose alternative means of transport if their needs are not met. In other words, if trains are consistently late no one will ride them. A comparison of the on time performance of trains and the ridership will bear out this connection.

In essence it is vital that trains arrive as scheduled for Amtrak to meet the requirements of its existence as defined by Congress and the public. Insuring that passenger trains receive preferential treatment is paramount to achieving that goal.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: William

Last Name: McDonald

Mailing Address: 18 Linden Hill

City: Woodstock

Country: United States

State or Province: VT

ZIP/Postal Code: 05091

Email Address: Wjm2223@cs.com

Organization Name: None

Comment: I sincerely wish that the STB will firmly adopt a policy of passenger train priority over freight traffic with substantial fines imposed for willful delay of passenger traffic. The reasons for this are obvious: human beings should take priority over "dead" freight. I have suffered particular inconvenience when traveling between Albany, New York and New York City only to be told that my train has been delayed west of Albany by freight traffic congestion. This has resulted in missed appointments and other inconveniences. Uncertain arrivals discourage use of a very comfortable and environmentally benign mode of transport that also reduces highway congestion. It simply is in everyone's interest to encourage the use of rail transport. Even those who choose to utilize our highways benefit from reduced congestion where travelers have an option to use reliable and predictable public transport. Please help us realize this goal.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

William McDonald

18 Linden Hill

Woodstock, Vermont

I sincerely wish that the STB will firmly adopt a policy of passenger train priority over freight traffic with substantial fines imposed for willful delay of passenger traffic. The reasons for this are obvious: human beings should take priority over "dead" freight. I have suffered particular inconvenience when traveling between Albany, New York and New York City only to be told that my train has been delayed west of Albany by freight traffic congestion. This has resulted in missed appointments and other inconveniences. Uncertain arrivals discourage use of a very comfortable and environmentally benign mode of transport that also reduces highway congestion. It simply is in everyone's interest to encourage the use of rail transport. Even those who choose to utilize our highways benefit from reduced congestion where travelers have an option to use reliable and predictable public transport. Please help us realize this goal.

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William McDonald

18 Linden Hill

Woodstock, Vermont

Please Do Not Reply To This Email.

Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Nick

Last Name: Carney

Mailing Address:

City: Ann Arbor

Country: United States

State or Province: MI

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: Please withdraw the policy statement so that the definition of "preference" will not be redefined without public input. The on-time performance of Amtrak trains is very important for our community.

I frequently ride Amtrak to reach Chicago and Detroit for both business and pleasure; the Ann Arbor station is my local stop.

With a relatively limited selection of Amtrak trains running along the corridor, on-time performance for Amtrak to be a viable means of transportation to make it to meetings or events on time. This is an issue that becomes all the more salient because of the lack of other reliable transit connections to Detroit, but is also essential with regards to travel to Chicago as well to ensure that Amtrak remains a viable alternative to car or bus travel.

Thank you for your consideration, and please withdraw this policy statement to redefine "preference."

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Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Carrie
Last Name: Barnecut
Mailing Address: 1550 Bancroft Ave. #432
City: San Leandro
Country: United States
State or Province: CA
ZIP/Postal Code: 94577
Email Address: Barnecut@sonic.net
Organization Name:

Comment: We belong to a national association. When we have to travel for meetings, we try to take the train. Amtrak travel adds pleasure to our business trip. We know many areas of our great country from stops we make when traveling - and of course we see much country and cities.

Our home station is Oakland. The OTP to and from there is much improved, the conductor assure us when we're running late through the midlands not to worry. There's lots of catchup time built into the schedule. The padded time tends to be in the less populated states.

There's a problem if officials judge OTP as proposed. We meet travelers who have driven hours to catch the train in the central states who have had long waits late into the night. I believe officials should care about on-time performance for all stations. All Amtrak passengers pay taxes and should be given as much consideration as those from big cities.

Here's hoping my single voice counts during your considerations!

Carrie Barnecut

We belong to a national association. When we have to travel for meetings, we try to take the train. Amtrak travel adds pleasure to our business trip. We know many areas of our great country from stops we make when traveling - and of course we see much country and cities.

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Carrie Barnecut

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Carl

Last Name: Thor

Mailing Address: PO Box 1174

City: Vancouver

Country:

State or Province: WA

ZIP/Postal Code: 98666

Email Address: cthor01@yahoo.com

Organization Name:

Comment: Proposed statement shifting burden of proof from host railroads to Amtrak regarding the impact of preferential dispatching of passenger trains is not only a bad idea, but contradicts laws (and court decisions upholding those laws) dating back to 1970.

Efficient and timely operation of passenger trains is essential to the viability of our national passenger rail network. Amtrak needs more tools - not less - at its disposal, in order to hold the host railroads to their contractual obligation to keep passenger trains running on schedule.

Amtrak relieved railroads of the burden of operating passenger trains 46 years ago. Yet, the freight railroads still seem bent on getting rid of passenger trains entirely. Yes, efficient movement of freight is vitally important to the railroads. But, I submit that efficient and timely movement of passengers should nearly always take precedence. Amtrak and the federal government must counter any effort to make second-class citizens of rail passengers.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Eric

Last Name: Schneider

Mailing Address: 895 N Old Steese Hwy

City: Fairbanks

Country: United States

State or Province: AK

ZIP/Postal Code: 99712

Email Address: ericschneider77@yahoo.com

Organization Name:

Comment: Please do not change the Passenger Train Preference standards that have been in effect since the start of Amtrak. Amtrak was created to take the cost of operating passenger trains off of the freight railroads. Among the commitments made at the time Amtrak was created was that passenger trains would retain a preference over freight trains when operating conflicts arose; this preference has been enshrined in law for at least 30 years, and periodically reaffirmed.

There should be no change to the manner the STB handles complaints of rail operators not giving the operational preference to passenger trains.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Steven
Last Name: Crosmer
Mailing Address: 2451 Canadian Way Apt. #27
City: Clearwater
Country: United States
State or Province: FL
ZIP/Postal Code: 33763-3747
Email Address: Sdcrosmer@aol.com
Organization Name:

Comment: In order to help Amtrak, and for that matter, all passenger trains, for example, to include commuter rail lines, Passenger trains need to be given priority over freight train movements when trains meet in areas where restricted track space availability is located, such as on a single-track mainline with passing sidings.

What government must realize is that there are passengers that depend on those trains to run ON TIME, with minimal or no delays to accomodate their schedules.

This is important for those who are traveling by train daily to their jobs, patients going to doctor appointments, students attending college classes, travelers who have other transportation connections to make, and most importantly of all, our military and members of the armed forces who ride the trains to report to duty on time.

I spent four years on active duty and can't say how important it is for the military to be on time, regardless of how they travel. Going by train should be no exception.

Delivery of freight is not as important as it is for passengers who ride the trains, and expect on-time service.

When Amtrak was first formed in 1970, this was done so to relieve the railroad freight carriers of being financially responsible for running the passenger trains. However, passengers still need to get to their destinations on time, and some freight carriers have literally left passenger trains on sidings, while letting their freight trains take priority over limited trackage, in some cases deliberately delaying trains in hopes Amtrak will either reroute service, reschedule the train, or discontinue it all together. The freight carriers owe Amtrak the burden of running Amtrak's trains on time in exchange for shifting the financial burden of running the passenger trains to the taxpayers, like they did in 1970.

It's not good when passenger trains run frequently late and an employee has to explain why he is late for work every day to his supervisor, a patient misses an important medical appointment to see a specialist, and is told to be rescheduled, and quite possibly be stuck with the bill for a "no show". Or, tell that to the college student who misses a class and comes unprepared for an exam on a test the next class day. The hardest thing of all, is for a soldier or a sailor to explain why he is late returning to duty beyond his control.

Aren't people more important than material things? Amtrak and passenger trains should be given priority of movement. Passenger trains move faster and will clear pass a siding much quicker than freight trains will. Amtrak does offer incentives for freight carriers to give their trains priority, and they should take advantage of it. But to deliberately delay a passenger train, the freight carriers should pay restitution to Amtrak and the passengers who were needlessly delayed.

In order to help Amtrak, and for that matter, all passenger trains, for example, to include commuter rail lines, Passenger trains need to be given priority over freight train movements when trains meet in areas where restricted track space availability is located, such as on a single-track mainline with passing sidings.

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Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Martyn
Last Name: Hitchcock
Mailing Address: 1507 Preston Ave.
City: Austin
Country: United States
State or Province: TX
ZIP/Postal Code: 78703-1903
Email Address: martynh@earthlink.net
Organization Name:

Comment: I travel with Amtrak from my home in Austin, Texas, for pleasure to visit friends or attend conferences in California & New York. Delays presumably caused by freight trains have sometimes caused me concern about meeting friends on arrival or missing the beginning of conferences seriously diminishing the pleasure of my journey. It is hard to allow a cushion for such delays when the Sunset Limited runs only three days a week; & the interval between the arrival of the Texas Eagle in Chicago & the departure of the Cardinal does not allow for much to go wrong. So I am very concerned that the rule giving passenger trains preference over freight, without burdening Amtrak with proving the relative unimportance of particular freight trains (how can Amtrak be expected to know such things without expensive & time-consuming research?) be retained.

I travel with Amtrak from my home in Austin, Texas, for pleasure to visit friends or attend conferences in California & New York. Delays presumably caused by freight trains have sometimes caused me concern about meeting friends on arrival or missing the beginning of conferences seriously diminishing the pleasure of my journey. It is hard to allow a cushion for such delays when the Sunset Limited runs only three days a week; & the interval between the arrival of the Texas Eagle in Chicago & the departure of the Cardinal does not allow for much to go wrong. So I am very concerned that the rule giving passenger trains preference over freight, without burdening Amtrak with proving the relative unimportance of particular freight trains (how can Amtrak be expected to know such things without expensive & time-consuming research?) be retained.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Michael

Last Name: Smith

Mailing Address: 117 Farm Street

City: Ithaca

Country: United States

State or Province: NY

ZIP/Postal Code: 14850

Email Address: mismith.ithaca@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: Dear STB--The way your proposed policy will interpret preference on the railroads will continue to put Amtrak and its thousands of daily travelers at a great disadvantage and inconvenience. Freight traffic arriving at a destination "on time" is a very different matter compared to human passengers. My family and I, who regularly travel on Amtrak on routes where delays are common (the Lake Shore Ltd. in particular), hope you will not interpret the policy to privilege the freight companies.

Dear STB--The way your proposed policy will interpret preference on the railroads will continue to put Amtrak and its thousands of daily travelers at a great disadvantage and inconvenience. Freight traffic arriving at a destination "on time" is a very different matter compared to human passengers. My family and I, who regularly travel on Amtrak on routes where delays are common (the Lake Shore Ltd. in particular), hope you will not interpret the policy to privilege the freight companies.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: David
Last Name: Collins
Mailing Address: 673 Sugar Creek Trail SE
City: Conyers
Country: United States
State or Province: GA
ZIP/Postal Code: 30094
Email Address: djc3collins@bellsouth.net
Organization Name:

Comment: At times AMTRAK 19 and 20 have experienced extended delays on single- and double-track lines between Washington, DC and New Orleans, LA. some, if not many, of these delays have been occasioned by freight consists overtaking AMTRAK or by being held awaiting freight consists approaching from the opposite direction.

These delays beg the question of preference handling of passenger trains vice freight trains. I have ridden Trains 19 and 20 in both directions and on multiple segments between Washington and New Orleans.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Peter

Last Name: Rankin

Mailing Address: 22 Irving Rd

City: Scotia

Country: United States

State or Province: NY

ZIP/Postal Code: 12302-2402

Email Address: prankin132@hotmail.com

Organization Name: None

Comment: There is no need for a new policy statement for passenger train dispatching on freight railroads. This was decided when Amtrak was created. The freight railroads have always hated this rule. Maybe someday they will stop trying to kill Amtrak. In my opinion this is what will happen if this policy is changed. There isn't enough passenger trains on the railroads to affect the dispatching of their freight trains. Just enforce the existing rights of Amtrak preferential dispatching and this should increase passengers and passenger miles and contribute to Amtrak's bottom line.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Grace

Last Name: Mullard

Mailing Address: 1808 Walworth Rd.

City: Palmyra

Country: United States

State or Province: NY

ZIP/Postal Code: 14522

Email Address: grace.mullard@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I travel by train to and from Rochester, NY, Hudson, NY, New York City, Chicago, IL and Milwaukee, WI. I have experienced some extended and unpleasant delays because of conflicts with CSX freight trains on the tracks being used by the passenger trains. Human passengers should ALWAYS have priority over any kind of commercial freight. Please be sure to continue to support the timely transport of people first!

Thank you,
Grace Mullard

I travel by train to and from Rochester, NY, Hudson, NY, New York City, Chicago, IL and Milwaukee, WI. I have experienced some extended and unpleasant delays because of conflicts with CSX freight trains on the tracks being used by the passenger trains. Human passengers should ALWAYS have priority over any kind of commercial freight. Please be sure to continue to support the timely transport of people first!

Thank you,
Grace Mullard

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Thomas

Last Name: Hart

Mailing Address: 11 Rachel Dr.

City: Rutland

Country: United States

State or Province: VT

ZIP/Postal Code: 05701

Email Address: thart5@comcast.net

Organization Name:

Comment: I am an AMTRAK train rider for purposes of attending meetings and education classes of professional and hobby organizations and for vacation trips.

I request that you WITHDRAW the proposed Policy Statement on Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions of 49 U.S.C. 24308(c) and (f). I make this request because I believe that changing the wording of laws and how they are applied should best be carried out by elected lawmakers, and not by parties closely aligned with the issues at hand.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Eric

Last Name: Schertzing

Mailing Address: 236 Kedzie Street

City: East Lansing

Country: United States

State or Province: MI

ZIP/Postal Code: 48823

Email Address: Schertzing@aol.com

Organization Name: Schertzing Communication

Comment: Passenger rail service is growing in value. As an Amtrak rider from East Lansing, Michigan to Chicago timeliness is critical for mid-day meetings. The train is more time efficient for my business than air or driving.

Please provide passenger rail priority on shared rail lines.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Everett

Last Name: Stuart

Mailing Address:

City: North Kingstown

Country: United States

State or Province: RI

ZIP/Postal Code: 02852

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: My wife and I are seniors and ride Amtrak from our home in Rhode island to Florida and the Midwest. As I understand it, the Surface Transportation Board's proposed "passenger train reference" "policy statement" would shift the burden of proof from the host freight railroads to Amtrak in making the case for the passenger train preference. This change would, I believe, be counter to the long standing legislative mandate that was established when the public relieved the freight railroads from operating passenger trains. While there may be some instances where freight trains should have preference, I believe the "policy statement" would result in a serious degradation in Amtrak service. This would be detrimental to the millions of Amtrak travelers. I recommend the proposed policy statement be withdrawn.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Neil

Last Name: Walter

Mailing Address:

City:

Country:

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: Amtrak must continue to have priority over freight traffic when running on freight railroads. If it does not, passenger rail service would be doomed. It is an absurd proposition to think that passenger trains would then have no effective schedule of operations. Also, Amtrak should not have to prove that it does not materially interfere with the operation of freight railroads.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Barbara

Last Name: Williams

Mailing Address: 2606 N Indian River Drive

City: Cocoa

Country: United States

State or Province: FL

ZIP/Postal Code: 32922

Email Address: rogbarb@cfl.rr.com

Organization Name:

Comment: My family uses Amtrak for vacations and frequently use the auto-train between Lorton and Sanford. For this reason, on time performance for us is reasonable within 30 minutes because our only rush may be to get to an event later in the day. If we used it for work, we would need better performance.

With regard to the Preference Provisions, it seems a change in Policy to put the burden of proof for the quality of freight transportation should not and is not reasonable to be a mission for Amtrak. For this reason the policy statement should be withdrawn.

On another note:

We would like to see electric car charging stations at Lorton and Sanford stations (although the city of Sanford has many so we often make use of those before going to the train station)

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Michael

Last Name: Simons

Mailing Address: 1673 Candlewood Street

City: Sparks

Country: United States

State or Province: NV

ZIP/Postal Code: 89434

Email Address: simons@unr.edu

Organization Name:

Comment: I urge the STB to reconsider the proposed policy statement and withdrawn it. Any changes, such as those being proposed should be done by elected officials and not by bureaucrats (or appointed commissions) behind closed doors. Policy statements such those being proposed need to have accountability attached to them.

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Please Do Not Reply To This Email.

Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Stuart

Last Name: Forsyth

Mailing Address: 1640 Winder Street

City: San Diego

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code: 92103-3736

Email Address: forsyth@usa.net

Organization Name:

Comment: The STB's proposed policy to shift the burden of proof to Amtrak instead of the railroads is unconscionable and in violation of the law adopted by Congress. The railroads have the duty to provide preference to Amtrak unless they can make certain showings. Shifting the burden to Amtrak in this regard would destroy the law--as well as the STB's other proposal regarding on-time performance. This proposed policy change would ensure that on-time performance, already something of a myth, would become history.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Joanne
Last Name: Swenson
Mailing Address: 900 Seventh Ave S.
City: Edmonds
Country: United States
State or Province:
ZIP/Postal Code: 98020
Email Address: joanne34@frontier.com
Organization Name:

Comment: A hallmark of a country that cares about its' citizens is to provide good, modern transportation. When the Empire Builder comes through Edmonds, Washington I feel like crying to see such worn out cars - a symbol of a decaying America. Obviously, the money is going elsewhere, probably to Eastern lines. In fact, we should have a modern railroad going across the U.S. right in the middle of the country from East to West along Highway 70, etc. When other countries give precedence to their passenger schedules over the commercial trains, it is scandalous that we don't do it also. Seeing that this commitment is honored by the railroads should be a function of the government. Travel by rail is a wonderful way to see America and I have found that the staff on the trains these last few years are very professional and make the trip enjoyable. If Europe can have wonderful trains, we should have them, especially on our major transit routes. Please care about our railroads! I do!

A hallmark of a country that cares about its' citizens is to provide good, modern transportation. When the Empire Builder comes through Edmonds, Washington I feel like crying to see such worn out cars - a symbol of a decaying America. Obviously, the money is going elsewhere, probably to Eastern lines. In fact, we should have a modern railroad going across the U.S. right in the middle of the country from East to West along Highway 70, etc. When other countries give precedence to their passenger schedules over the commercial trains, it is scandalous that we don't do it also. Seeing that this commitment is honored by the railroads should be a function of the government. Travel by rail is a wonderful way to see America and I have found that the staff on the trains these last few years are very professional and make the trip enjoyable. If Europe can have wonderful trains, we should have them, especially on our major transit routes. Please care about our railroads! I do!

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Gary

Last Name: Sprung

Mailing Address: 3675 Aspen Ct.

City: Boulder

Country: United States

State or Province: CO

ZIP/Postal Code: 80304

Email Address: garygnurps@gmail.com

Organization Name: Colorado Rail Passenger Association

Comment: The burden of proof for on-time performance should be on the freight railroads, not Amtrak. The original Amtrak law, plus Congressional actions since then, intended that railroads would get relief from the obligation of providing passenger service in exchange for access to their routes. Congress did not say that Amtrak gets second choice or is second tier. Passenger trains need speed and on-time performance to succeed.

American needs a robust passenger rail system. While the primary impediment to that goal is the level of funding by Congress, the STP should not make it even more difficult.

Last summer I rode the California Zephyr from Denver to Emeryville, CA and it was eight hours late because the host railroads gave freights top priority. That is unacceptable and will lead to the demise of passenger trains.

You serve the public interest, not the private interests of railroads. Certainly it is in the public interest for the private railroads to be successful. But their success is not significantly impaired by their obligation to give priority access to Amtrak. Please serve the general public interest and make sure Amtrak gets priority on its host railroads.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Thomas

Last Name: Beaumont

Mailing Address: 210 W Grant 417

City: Minneapolis

Country: United States

State or Province: MN

ZIP/Postal Code: 55403

Email Address: beaum001@umn.edu

Organization Name: none

Comment: The preference provisions being propose seem to me to take the burden of proof of interference in essential freight movement off the contracted railroads and placing it on Amtrak. This seems to effectively render the regulation concerning the contractual requirement that the railways give preference to passenger train movement moot. Why and how would Amtrak have to bare the burden of making such an argument? Amtrak lacks both the information and the authority to make such. The host railroad must be required to prove that it had legitimate and objective good reason to violate it service contract with Amtrak.

My family uses Amtrak passenger service from Minneapolis St, Paul, MN frequently. We rely on timely service because so many of our destinations require change of train in Chicago, Seattle or Portland. To provide for this, Amtrak MUST have maximum authority and operating advantages on host railways.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Rev. Karl A.

Last Name: Claver

Mailing Address: fatherkarl79@yahoo.com

City: Alpena

Country: United States

State or Province: MI

ZIP/Postal Code: 49707

Email Address: fatherkarl79@yahoo.com

Organization Name: Holy Family Adult Foster Care

Comment: The federal government must make sure that passenger trains are given priority over freight trains. Delaying passengers have caused me to miss appointments as well as correcting trains. As a result, when Amtrak does not provide an overnight stay for me, I have to find a place of lodging, as well as a taxi and some nourishment. So you can see much money is wasted because of late trains, as well as lost opportunities. Please do all in your power to inforce the policy that the freight railroads themselves agreed to when Amtrak was formed in 1971. Thank you very much for your time and consideration in this matter.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:
First Name: Peter
Last Name: Eldridge
Mailing Address: 6641 Wakefield Drive #205
City: Alexandria
Country: United States
State or Province: VA
ZIP/Postal Code: 22307
Email Address: petereldridge19@gmail.com
Organization Name:
Comment:

As a member of NARP I urge the Surface Transportation Board to consider our organizations proposals to ensure on time performance of Amtrak trains and those of commuter agencies. The proposals are as follows:

Measure on-time arrivals at all stations, not just at the end points; to use a single 15-minute standard at each point along a trains route, and; to trigger an automatic investigation if trains on a route dip below the OTP standard more than 20 percent of the time;

Look more closely at what constitutes an end point station, given that there are routes at which intermediate stations constitute end-points for many individual services;

Collect and publish data including the effect of degraded OTP on connections, and require statistical reporting by Amtrak detailing when late trains cause passengers to miss connections or when Amtrak is forced to delay departure of trains for connecting passengers. Collected and published data should also include OTP at key chokepoints where passenger trains are handed off from one host railroad to another;

Use the OTP rulemaking to establish a minimum standard Amtrak must meet to avoid delays caused by equipment failures, and recognize that Amtrak-caused delays contribute to only a small fraction of the total delays reported.

Asa one who regularly uses both Auto train to Florida and regional services to Tidewater Virginia it always a gamble ir the train will be on time or not especially on CSX metals. Nothing is more dishearting than arriving late at a destination and having to alter plans. Again these are reasonable metrics that will have a great impact on improving on time performance.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Fred

Last Name: Heath

Mailing Address: 344 Main St.

City: Orono

Country: United States Minor Outlying Islands

State or Province: ME

ZIP/Postal Code: 04473

Email Address: Heathwinds@aol.com

Organization Name: NARP member

Comment: I wish to support any action or funding required to expand rail capacity to accommodate both freight and passenger operations at a maximum feasible average speed. Since government is more directly involved in passenger service, it needs to advocate and act improve speed and reliability in this area. We have enough space and fuel consumed by highway and air travel which can only be limited by expanded usable rail service.

Fred Heath retired music professor, member of NARP since 1969, has ridden on every mile of Amtrak system and in 18 European nations.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: John

Last Name: Bargo

Mailing Address: 168 S 61st St

City: Milwaukee

Country: United States

State or Province: WI

ZIP/Postal Code: 53214

Email Address: jbargo@wi.rr.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I am writing in regards to the proposed change to how the Surface Transportation Board looks at the burden of proof that the freight railroads need to show when on-time performance is an issue.

My wife and I are frequent passengers on Amtrak trains. We are both retired and enjoy travelling by train to see other parts of our great country.

We live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and usually start our trips in Chicago.

There have been many times when we need to be in a connecting city to board a train. When we arrive at that city late due to congestion on a host railroad, that becomes a burden on us and other travelers.

We usually try to leave sufficient time between trains knowing we might arrive later than the time schedule indicates. When our train arrives much later than anticipated, it is usually because our train was delayed by the host railroad for their trains.

Changing the way the rule is enforced will make out trips much less enjoyable if we cannot rely on timely arrival at our destination.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: michael

Last Name: laprade

Mailing Address: 1200 foxchase ridge

City: charlottesville

Country: United States

State or Province: VA

ZIP/Postal Code: 22902

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: I am a frequent AMTRAK rider who uses AMTRAK to travel to the Washington DC area (and beyond) from Charlottesville VA on tracks not owned by AMTRAK. It is of vital importance that AMTRAK passenger trains be given priority to assure on time arrival in order that over 125000 Charlottesville travelers annually can make their connecting trains or the meeting / event they are attending at their destination. Failure to give priority to AMTRAK will result in many of those 125000 taking back to the already overcrowded roads.

I am a frequent AMTRAK rider who uses AMTRAK to travel to the Washington DC area (and beyond) from Charlottesville VA on tracks not owned by AMTRAK. It is of vital importance that AMTRAK passenger trains be given priority to assure on time arrival in order that over 125000 Charlottesville travelers annually can make their connecting trains or the meeting / event they are attending at their destination. Failure to give priority to AMTRAK will result in many of those 125000 taking back to the already overcrowded roads.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Kelly
Last Name: Raczkowski
Mailing Address: 13140 Oakdale Street
City: Southgate
Country: United States
State or Province: MI
ZIP/Postal Code: 48192-4344
Email Address: raz021@yahoo.com
Organization Name:

Comment: I ride the the Wolverine line from Ann Arbor to Chicago for leisure, the experience, and as an alternative to driving my car. I would like to ride the train more often and have it as a viable alternative to other forms of travel. My travels have taken me to Europe where their train services are more prevalent and widely used. A large amount of this success is due to On-Time Performance (OTP). With this in mind, the higher OTP the train system has the more passengers are going to choose this mode of transportation.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Edward
Last Name: Sackinger
Mailing Address: 2821 Majestic Drive
City: San Antonio
Country: United States
State or Province: TX
ZIP/Postal Code: 78228
Email Address: me@eddysackinger.com
Organization Name:

Comment: I ride Amtrak quite often usually from either the Klamath Falls, OR station or the San Antonio, TX station. The Coast Starlight, which is often nicknamed the Coast Starlate due to its poor on time performance, would be hampered by the proposed rule change. If Amtrak can't force a change no change will be made to benefit Passenger Rail. I love taking the train but its hard to make the case when I can't predict when my train will arrive.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Steve

Last Name: Costa

Mailing Address: 518 Venice Drive

City: Blandon

Country: United States

State or Province: PA

ZIP/Postal Code: 19510

Email Address: Costa04@ptd.net

Organization Name: Taxpayer

Comment: I am writing with regard to the Surface Transportation Board's proposed policy on how preference is to be defined with regard to addressing train delays. I strongly believe that the burden of proof for such delays ought to be placed on the freight railroads and NOT on Amtrak.

I have ridden the train from Lancaster, PA to Pittsburgh, PA and have have experienced Amtrak train delays due to traffic on the line from Norfolk and Southern. I am asking the STB to realize that the freight lines were essentially saved when Amtrak was created and these lines were allowed to shed what at that time was unprofitable passenger service.

The STB should be supporting efforts to strengthen the performance of passenger rail. On-time performance helps foster reliability and the continued growth in passenger rail as a traveling option. Sadly my town, Blandon, PA has not had passenger service since 1963.

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Submitter Info:
First Name: Jason
Last Name: Sanford
Mailing Address: 1633 Village Center Drive Apartment 305
City: Lakeland
Country: United States
State or Province: FL
ZIP/Postal Code: 33803
Email Address: jasonsarafini@yahoo.com
Organization Name:
Comment: To whom it may concern,

I am a regular Amtrak passenger for both work and leisure travel. For me on-time performance is very important. As a passenger it is very frustrating to find myself stuck on a siding for hours while host railroads intentionally give freight trains priority over Amtrak. When trains are delayed I am late for meetings, miss appointments, and miss family events. While my home station of Orlando Florida is served by all daytime trains, some stations I visit are small, understaffed, and only served at night. If my train is delayed while traveling to one of these stations I risk being alone in the middle of the night unable to get a ride or taxi service to where I am going.

In the past I have sent letters to CSX, Norfolk Southern, and to the FDOT with no response. I hope that my comments here will make a greater impact for passenger like me and the 31 million riders who use Amtrak each year. We all deserve to be treated far better than we have been by the host railroads.

Jason Sanford

To whom it may concern,

I am a regular Amtrak passenger for both work and leisure travel. For me on-time performance is very important. As a passenger it is very frustrating to find myself stuck on a siding for hours while host railroads intentionally give freight trains priority over Amtrak. When trains are delayed I am late for meetings, miss appointments, and miss family events. While my home station of Orlando Florida is served by all daytime trains, some stations I visit are small, understaffed, and only served at night. If my train is delayed while traveling to one of these stations I risk being alone in the middle of the night unable to get a ride or taxi service to where I am going.

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Jason Sanford

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Bryant

Last Name: Lane

Mailing Address: 3531 w 100 n

City: Bargersville

Country: United States

State or Province: IN

ZIP/Postal Code: 46106

Email Address: Bsl2006@comcast.net

Organization Name: Transportation workers union

Comment: Amtrak needs right of way for more on time trains. It's 100% vital to the growth and longevity of Amtrak. 20,000+ jobs could be at stake as well as companies that feed off Amtrak business. All we here are trains not showing up on time due to freight trains.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Yvette

Last Name: Chaney

Mailing Address: 4903 Backwater Ct

City: Dumfries

Country: United States

State or Province: VA

ZIP/Postal Code: 22025

Email Address: yvettemchaney@hotmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: People should be priority not "goods". Traveling passengers are important!

People should be priority not "goods". Traveling passengers are important!

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: David

Last Name: Forsythe

Mailing Address: 2509 Chambers Lake Lane SE

City: Lacey

Country: United States

State or Province: WA

ZIP/Postal Code: 98503

Email Address: dkforsythe@comcast.net

Organization Name: 0

Comment: It is crucial the all stations be included, not just end points. I volunteer at a station that is not an endpoint. Passengers are frustrated by late trains for which they arrive at the station early only to find out the train is late by as much as an hour. They then find that the train is on time or close to it at its endpoint.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Bob

Last Name: Schwartz

Mailing Address: 5555 North Sheridan Road

City: Chicago

Country: United States

State or Province: IL

ZIP/Postal Code: 60640

Email Address: rufnel@aol.com

Organization Name: NARP

Comment: It is imperative that the passenger needs of the Amtrak service be paramount in setting out public policy. In the absence of major investment in high speed rail as seen in many nations across the globe, the existing passenger service in the United States must be operated on time and with as much frequency as possible.

Passenger service needs to be given priority over freight hauling whenever the services come into conflict. This is the only way to maintain fast, reliable service.

On time performance (OTP) ought to be measured not only to "end points" but by intermediate points as well. All passengers deserve on time trains, not just those headed to end point destinations.

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Please Do Not Reply To This Email.

Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: maurine

Last Name: pyle

Mailing Address: 400 n westridge Apt B3

City: carbondale

Country:

State or Province: Illinois (IL)

ZIP/Postal Code: 62901

Email Address: metanoia.maurine@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: As a regular train rider, the efficiency of rail is most important to me. When trains arrive late because of freight traffic, it affects my travel times significantly. I live on the line from Carbondale IL and take trains north and south. Since I do not own a car, Amtrak is my major transportation. Keep the trains running on time.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412

RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: David

Last Name: Wright

Mailing Address: 6021 S Pere Marquette Hwy

City: Ludington

Country: United States

State or Province: MI

ZIP/Postal Code: 49431

Email Address: Dwright659@gmail.com

Organization Name:

Comment: As if Amtrak does not have enough problems-we the riding public are entitled to some breaks, or perks, when we're doing our best to help the embattled railroad just by continuing to ride, after facing the late arrivals, etc., particularly on one of the Queens of the line-the Empire Builder. There is quite enough of this type of action lately, where decisions seem to be made arbitrarily, with no regard for the public good or want. In Europe, the trains run on time-as they do (mostly) in the NE Corridor. If schedules continue to slip and are exacerbated by this "policy", ridership will plummet through no fault of its own, and the US will be ridiculed around the world for this travesty. Please, allow Amtrak to flourish by supporting their efforts country-wide.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: John

Last Name: Wagner

Mailing Address: 405 Fernwood Drive

City: Seneca

Country: United States

State or Province: SC

ZIP/Postal Code: 29678

Email Address: jrwgnr@clemson.edu

Organization Name:

Comment: Giving passenger trains priority over freight operations is critical to making connections for multi-train trips.

I take several trips per year from the Clemson, South Carolina Amtrak Station (trains 19 and 20) to visit relatives in Pennsylvania, Boston, and upstate New York. The on-time performance of train 20 is wildly unpredictable. Occasionally the train is on time at the Clemson station, but more than half the time, that train is over one hour late, and several times when I have ridden, the train arrived over three hours late. When a train is that late in Clemson, it is impossible to make train connections in Philadelphia or New York City. Also, I occasionally fly out of Atlanta Airport (if cheap fares are available) and use Train #19 to travel from Clemson to Atlanta. Although #19 is usually on time, one time it was more than 90 minutes late and caused me to miss my flight in Atlanta. When I contact Amtrak about these delays, the answer has always been holdups due to freight traffic. Government regulators should make sure passenger trains enjoy priority on shared tracks because delays hurt people a lot more than they hurt freight.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:
First Name: John
Last Name: Etter
Mailing Address: 2211 SW Park Place
City: Portland
Country: United States
State or Province: OR
ZIP/Postal Code: 97205
Email Address: johnetter4449@gmail.com
Organization Name: N.A.
Comment: February 12, 2016

To the Surface Transportation Board:

Regarding the policy statement on passenger train priority on host railroads:

I support language in the policy that gives passenger trains preferential consideration for on-time performance. I utilized Amtrak twice in 2015, once for a cross country trip (Oregon- California-Michigan). I assisted two others in Amtrak trips, and have consulted with other rail transportation users. I experienced two delays, created by the Union Pacific Railroad, that could have been avoided by simply holding a freight train for ten minutes to allow a passenger train the opportunity to get in front of the freight. Freight trains should be no longer than the sidings they should take in order to allow a passenger train to pass.

There are many hours of inconvenient waiting by many passengers. Trains need a better reputation for being reliably on time in order to make rail travel more attractive. This needs to be part of our national push for energy efficiency lure people to travel by train. I plan future travel by train, if the train travel is reliable.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

February 12, 2016

To the Surface Transportation Board:

Regarding the policy statement on passenger train priority on host railroads:

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Thank you for considering this testimony.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Clifford
Last Name: Schexnayder
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 2428
City: Branford
Country: United States
State or Province: CT
ZIP/Postal Code: 06405
Email Address: cliff.s@asu.edu

Organization Name: Independent Construction Consultant

Comment: Because I use Amtrak for business travel on time performance of train service is important to me. I understand how single and even double track rail lines limit and control individual train through put but as public transportation we should be able to expect arrival and departure times with in 30 minutes of published schedules.

Rail transportation service is part of a total transportation system and serves a great need. The public show be able to rely on dependable on time performance by Amtrak.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Louis
Last Name: Dunning
Mailing Address: 19275 Potomac circle
City: North fort myers
Country: United States
State or Province:
ZIP/Postal Code: 33917
Email Address: pldun2712@aol.com
Organization Name:
Comment: On time performance and preference go hand and hand.
To have an intercity network both are crucial.
My wife and I have ridden and continue to ride trains
here and around the world.
Trains re an important part of the overall trnsportation
network.
Trnsportation is dependence on timely connections nd transfers.
Trains serve an important role and need to be part of an efficient
Nationwide system.

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:
First Name: Michael
Last Name: Wilkinson
Mailing Address: 900 Southampton Rd # 47
City: Benicia
Country: United States
State or Province: CA
ZIP/Postal Code: 94510
Email Address: mnwilkinson@gmail.com
Organization Name:
Comment: re:docket EP-~~726~~-0

728

On-time performance IS important to me because as a passenger, I care whether or not the train is on time at the station where I am going to board. End-point OTP is nice, but ONLY if you are boarding at the starting point and getting off at the end. Amtrak said in it's comments that only 10% of it's stations are endpoints, and only about 1/3 of Amtrak's passengers detrain at the end point of a route. I ride Amtrak, and I board my train at Martinez, CA. I ride mostly for pleasure, but sometimes I ride the train to attend either Capitol Corridor or San Joaquin Joint Powers Board meetings. On-time performance is especially important if I am making a connection to another train or other conveyance.

As to the issue of preference-the law (49 USC Section 24308c) was written to put the burden of proof on the host railroad, where it belongs.

An all stations OTP is the only meaningful standard that should be applied in determining whether or not a PRIIA section 213 investigation should be initiated.

re:docket EP-~~726~~-0

728

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FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Denis

Last Name: Mayfield

Mailing Address:

City:

Country: United States

State or Province: TX

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: A train is not an airplane. It does more than go from Point A to Point B. It generally has multiple stops in between and all of them should count for on time performance. Schedule padding may allow a train to make up time before it reaches it's end point, but that doesn't mean it won't be an hour or more late to my train station. All stations should count in On Time Performance calculations.

Railroads agreed to allow Amtrak preference in track access in exchange for relieving the railroads of their responsibility to provide passenger service more than forty years ago. Not for a day, a week, or a month, but permanently. Freight railroads know when Amtrak trains are scheduled and should be able to deal with it accordingly.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Bruce

Last Name: Jamison

Mailing Address: 916 Magdeline Drive

City: Madison

Country: United States

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code: 53704

Email Address: brucecoryj@gmail.com

Organization Name: Keyword Search

Comment: I ride Amtrak to reduce my carbon footprint for long distance travel. I will be traveling to California and Oregon from Wisconsin in the next 2 months, and to Washington DC this June. I leave from Columbus, Wisconsin and Central Station in Chicago.

On time performance is important to me, especially as I have to make connections on my way.

My understanding is that rules are being considered by STB which would define OTP as being within 10 minutes for intermediate stops and 30 minutes for end points. The endpoints are important to me, for instance when using the Hiawatha to reach Chicago trains, and catching the Coastal connecting from the Southwest Chief in LA. The rule should be 10 minutes for all stops.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: George

Last Name: Davis

Mailing Address:

City:

Country: United States

State or Province: MN

ZIP/Postal Code: 56560

Email Address:

Organization Name: NARP, All Aboard Minnesota

Comment: I support the original definition of "preference" as used in 49 USC Section 24308c that gives Amtrak trains preference over freight railroads which started with the establishment of Amtrak in 1970-1971.

Since the time the freight railroads agreed to this law, it has been understood that an exception to this passenger train preference was only possible if the freight RR could show that preference for a passenger train would materially lessen the quality of freight trains use of the RR. The burden of proof is on the freight RR not on Amtrak. We riders know that the freight railroads have not shown this preference during the last few years. BNSF almost ruined the Empire Builder along its northern transcon due to too little capacity. BNSF has since added capacity and the Empire Builder runs on time once more.

I very much respect our freight RR system and am a stock holder in Berkshire Hathaway which owns BNSF. I ride Amtrak trains on BNSF track.

We need a railroad system that has capacity for freight trains running with Amtrak trains in a preferred status. We also need to build out the railroad system's capacity to allow additional Amtrak trains that would make the intercity passenger rail system more efficient for people to use (ie: an Amtrak train from Mpls/St. Paul to Kansas City.) I support tax dollars to assist the freight railroads to do this.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Neal

Last Name: Musitano Jr

Mailing Address: 701 Summit Ave Apt A4

City: Philadelphia

Country: United States

State or Province: PA

ZIP/Postal Code: 19128

Email Address: nealmusitano@yahoo.com

Organization Name:

Comment: I take Amtrak from Philadelphia to NYC, Boston, Montreal, Baltimore, Washington DC, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh.

I have also taken Amtrak from Chicago to Minneapolis.

The trains and tracks could all be upgraded for improved service

I oppose any change that would slow passenger times.

I oppose giving freight trains priority over passengers trains.

I take Amtrak from Philadelphia to NYC, Boston, Montreal, Baltimore, Washington DC, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh.

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RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Paul

Last Name: Tiger

Mailing Address: 452 Dickson Street

City: Longmont

Country: United States

State or Province:

ZIP/Postal Code: 80504

Email Address: paul@paultiger.com

Organization Name: The Tigers' of Longmont

Comment: One of the failures of US rail by Amtrak hasn't been Amtrak itself, but the propensity of the government to permit the demise of "excess" trackage, thereby forcing both freight and passenger traffic on to the same track. There is little preference to move people, but lots of preference to move freight.

My wife and I are Amtrak travelers. We eschew air travel unless absolutely necessary. In the past decade ridership has increased, while Amtrak continues to downsize its services. Freightlines suffering from grid lock after decades of track removal cannot be held blameless. Nor can the government that lacks vision for ground transportation. As constant Amtrak riders and well informed rail fans, we understand all of the current reasons in commerce to give right of way to material transport over travelers.

New administrations desire to build their own mandates to follow. Create their own new vision, with or without the help of the system's users. Old visions die withering in a corner.

The Amtrak vision was created by Congress, and modifications of its charter and who gets preference over its operations and existence remains under the control of the congress - our duly sworn representatives. Not this week's switchman.

Our interest in Amtrak has an avenue with my elected representatives. We feel that interest supports increases in passenger rail services. It is not a trade for box cars. They are mutually exclusive.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Richard
Last Name: Abbott
Mailing Address: 646 LINCOLN AVE
City: PALO ALTO
Country:
State or Province: California
ZIP/Postal Code: 94301
Email Address: hapabbott@gmail.com
Organization Name:

Comment: I think having an ontime efficecnt train systme and public transportation system that runs on time help is important for all travelers make plans and keep them. I also think that having a train system that runs on time help us all build confidence in our government, which insures that we run more smoothly as a society.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: James

Last Name: Pakala

Mailing Address: 1303 Mautenne Drive

City: Ballwin

Country: United States

State or Province: MO

ZIP/Postal Code: 63021

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: I strongly believe that the Surface Transportation Board needs to revise its Policy Statement regarding complaint proceedings under 49 U.S.C. 24308(f) and related issues under 49 U.S.C. 24308(c). The intent of Congress is being thwarted unless changes favorable to train passengers are made now.

I strongly believe that the Surface Transportation Board needs to revise its Policy Statement regarding complaint proceedings under 49 U.S.C. 24308(f) and related issues under 49 U.S.C. 24308(c). The intent of Congress is being thwarted unless changes favorable to train passengers are made now.

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RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Herbert

Last Name: Goodfriend

Mailing Address: 221 Murray St - Apt. 5

City: Elizabeth

Country: United States

State or Province: NJ

ZIP/Postal Code: 07202

Email Address: bonami@mailforce.net

Organization Name:

Comment: I am writing in opposition to the issuance of this policy statement. I do support the Board's interest "in receiving evidence from which it can determine the host carriers policies and procedures used to satisfy their preference obligations to Amtrak trains."

However, I do not think a policy statement is necessary because:

--the term "preference" is clear in the law.

--I do not agree with shifting the burden of proof from the host carriers to Amtrak when preference is denied.

--If a specific denial of preference actually has positive ramifications for the larger picture, that can be taken into account on a case-by-case basis.

--The freight railroads agreed to give preference to passenger trains in return for their being relieved of the obligation to operate passenger service.

--Frequent and unpredictable delays are a major inconvenience to passengers and are guaranteed to reduce Amtrak's patronage and revenue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Herbert Goodfriend

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--The freight railroads agreed to give preference to passenger trains in return for their being relieved of the obligation to operate passenger service.

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Yours truly,

Herbert Goodfriend

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: George

Last Name: NeSmith

Mailing Address: 6630 Cinnabar Coast Lane

City: North Las Vegas

Country: United States

State or Province: NV

ZIP/Postal Code: 89084-1209

Email Address: qm2nev@centurylink.net

Organization Name: NARP

Comment: Although I live in a city with NO Amtrak service, I do ride trains when traveling. Amtrak trains SHOULD have preference over freight trains. Arrival time at intermediate points should be used to determine time keeping for the entire route. There is no reason to change this rule.

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Please Do Not Reply To This Email.

Public Comments on Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,;=====

Title: Policy Statements: Implementing Intercity Passenger Train On-Time Performance and Preference Provisions,
FR Document Number: 2015-32412
RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Lucinda
Last Name: collins
Mailing Address: 5th st
City: mebane
Country: United States
State or Province: NC
ZIP/Postal Code: 27302
Email Address: collinslucinda@aol.com
Organization Name: none

Comment: I am an Amtrak rider and of course on-time performance matters as it does with any form of transportation. Have used stations in Raleigh NC, Columbia, Denmark SC and Yemassee SC. Have traveled RT Yemassee to NYC and to Rhinebeck NY. I support Amtrak/passenger preference being continued. Please withdraw the statement that was given re: determining preference, does not need to be determined behind closed doors. I support more government funds being directed for railway improvement. Look at US's railway system compared to Europe and Asia's, baffling discrepancy. Thank you, Lucinda Collins

I am an Amtrak rider and of course on-time performance matters as it does with any form of transportation. Have used stations in Raleigh NC, Columbia, Denmark SC and Yemassee SC. Have traveled RT Yemassee to NYC and to Rhinebeck NY. I support Amtrak/passenger preference being continued. Please withdraw the statement that was given re: determining preference, does not need to be determined behind closed doors. I support more government funds being directed for railway improvement. Look at US's railway system compared to Europe and Asia's, baffling discrepancy. Thank you, Lucinda Collins

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RIN:
Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Henry

Last Name: Willis

Mailing Address: 5649 E 32nd Street

City: Tucson

Country: United States

State or Province: AZ

ZIP/Postal Code: 85711

Email Address: tedaa7hx@mail.com

Organization Name:

Comment:

docket # EP-~~726~~-0

728

In my travels we have had some problems with late performance. On one trip we went from Tucson to Chicago and transferred to the Washington, DC train. We were late getting in to Chicago and barely had time to catch the next train. That train was late and we totally missed the southbound train to Orlando, FL, which was our destination. We had to be rescheduled to a later train in order to get to our destination. Yes we could have flown to Orlando and saved a couple of days but I refuse to fly due to the governments interference in boarding planes. I don't need the hassle and we love seeing the country when we travel by train. Over the last 15 years we have caught many late trains and had several layovers. I only travel distances by Amtrak. Many people have told me that they would by Amtrak but Arrival times are too unreliable, so they can't depend on it. They have to look for more reliable transportation.

A reasonable standard in my estimation is to arrive within 15 minutes of schedule at both intermediate stations as well as end point.

docket # EP-~~726~~-0

728

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Anthony

Last Name: Vaiarella

Mailing Address: 1011 19th st

City: Rockford

Country: United States

State or Province: IL

ZIP/Postal Code: 61104

Email Address: csxt94@yahoo.com

Organization Name:

Comment: As a major Amtrak supporter, on-time performance is very important to me because it is a large factor in the reliability of a passenger rail service. When OTP is poor, it hurts the reliability of the route, which causes ridership to drop dramatically. In the past, this problem has lead to many routes being discontinued in times of budget cuts because this ridership was too low, mostly due to poor OTP. Further, what caused most of these problems with OTP was the host railroad's negligence in giving Amtrak priority as required by the Rail Passenger Act of 1970. Many of the routes that were lost due to low ridership caused by poor OTP include: the Black Hawk (which served my hometown), the North Star, the Floridian, The National Limited, the North Coast Hiawatha, the Broadway Limited, the Gulf Breeze, the Desert Wind, the Pioneer, and the Sunset Limited east of NOL, among many others. One of my worst nightmares would be for this list to keep growing. What's even worse is the fact that, once a passenger rail route is gone, especially a long distance route, it is very difficult and perhaps even nearly impossible to get it back, not to mention that, even if such an act is successful, it usually takes many years to get the route up and running again AFTER funding has been identified. Because of these drastic consequences of losing an Amtrak route, we desperately need to take steps to improve OTP of what routes we have left to prevent low ridership from possibly causing the loss of more routes. One way we can do that is to enforce the requirement that requires host railroads to give Amtrak priority more strictly.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Kenneth

Last Name: Ryan

Mailing Address: 1020 Kingston Rd 5K

City: Mt Shasta

Country: United States

State or Province: CA

ZIP/Postal Code: 96067

Email Address: kdr1265@gmail.com

Organization Name: Planning & Service Area 2 Area Agency on Aging

Comment: I comment as a regular Coast Starlight rider originating in Dunsmuir, CA, generally the mid point of its run from Seattle to Los Angeles, you will note trains 11 & 14 can be counted on to be anywhere from 30 min to 3 or more hours late every day. There are no staffed stations between Klamath Falls, OR, 2.5 hrs north of us, and Sacramento, CA 5 hours south of us. Couple this with Amtrak's refusal to improve the unsafe and poorly lighted platform at Dunsmuir and the fact that southbound we are scheduled to leave at 12:35AM or northbound at 4:56AM (a ridiculous non-memory friendly time) one can only conclude Amtrak, the UP, and the Surface Transportation Board are in collusion to see our station die from lack of patronage. However, from 10 to 30 people board or exit every trip every night, regardless of timeliness.

The STP should establish Dunsmuir as a time point for on time service evaluation at the midpoint of this 1,000 mile run if there is to be any hope for reliable service times at the 3 night stops, Dunsmuir, Redding, and Chico on these overnight runs. Also a factor: Dunsmuir, Klamath Falls, and Chemult are the only stations on the entire run that have no alternative ambus or local agency provided alternative intercity passenger services.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: James

Last Name: Loewen

Mailing Address: 4116 13th Pl. NE

City: Washington

Country: United States

State or Province: DC

ZIP/Postal Code: 20017

Email Address: jloewen@uvm.edu

Organization Name: [self]

Comment: Please note:

(1) When Amtrak started, decades ago, railroads granted its trains priority over their own freight trains. Of course, they had good reasons. They wanted to get rid of their own passenger trains, and this agreement persuaded the federal government and state governments to let them do it. Nevertheless, they did agree. And they should. Their freights do not post public schedules. They do not serve dozens and even hundreds of people, each. Amtrak SHOULD have priority.

(2) Amtrak has built in cushions to their schedules, to allow more trains to arrive on time, even when freight trains have in fact delayed them. On the trip from Chicago to DC, for example, Amtrak allows 44 minutes to go from Rockville MD to Union Station, a distance of 16 miles. The train does not really go 22 MPH. Rather, that time is in the schedule to make up for lateness earlier in the run.

(3) Therefore if you only measure on-time performance at end points, you will never learn about the extent of the problem. The "Capital Limited" can be a full hour late at all its important stops from Gary IN through Cleveland and Pittsburgh to Cumberland, MD, and then make up half an hour and arrive "on time" in DC.

So please expand your record keeping. It's easy for Amtrak or the freight lines to submit full information to you.

Thank you.

Please note:

(1) When Amtrak started, decades ago, railroads granted its trains priority over their own freight trains. Of course, they had good reasons. They wanted to get rid of their own passenger trains, and this agreement persuaded the federal government and state governments to let them do it. Nevertheless, they did agree. And they should. Their freights do not post public schedules. They do not serve dozens and even hundreds of people, each. Amtrak SHOULD have priority.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Anthony
Last Name: Spellacy
Mailing Address: 21 5th street
City: Franklinville
Country: United States
State or Province: NJ
ZIP/Postal Code: 08322
Email Address: aps28921@gmail.com
Organization Name:

Comment: I'm not sure why the board feels it needs to make a policy on something that has been defined by law, which has been subsequently reaffirmed by law. This definition has been provided for the board by the people who were elected to do just that task, as opposed to the board who was not elected to perform this task. Preference has also been addressed by the D.O.T. and the D.O.J., again making the task the board has set about redundant.

Instead the board should be enforcing the preference of passenger traffic that is required by the law.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Michael
Last Name: Shirley
Mailing Address: P.O.Box 602
City: Lenox
Country: United States
State or Province: MA
ZIP/Postal Code: 01240-0602
Email Address: shirley@massmed.org
Organization Name:

Comment: ~~(EP-726-0)~~ EP 728

I am a retired Anesthesiologist living in the Berkshires, West Massachusetts. While working I used trains to visit 1) New York for conferences, leisure & entertainment (from Albany & Hudson, N.Y.), 2) Boston (from Pittsfield & Springfield) 3) Toronto (from Albany) 4) Miami (from New York).

Now retired I do the same trips for tourism & visiting family in Miami.

I seem to be a part of a large & growing section of the population that uses trains rather than automobiles & planes for travel. I urge you to maintain & grow the US network of trains with due regard to economic development & tourism in regions. Attention to arrival & departure times, food & comfort on trains will spur progress and eventually consideration & feasibility of High Speed routes.

Michael Shirley

728

(EP-~~726-0~~)

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Charles

Last Name: Grotzke

Mailing Address: 18136 Rita Rd Apt 2a

City: Tinley Park

Country: United States

State or Province: IL

ZIP/Postal Code: 60477

Email Address: garagekey1947@yahoo.com

Organization Name:

Comment: If AMTRAK is to succeed in growing its business and continue to save lives by diverting automobile passengers to train travel, it must be able to provide on-time service.AMTRAK trains must have preference over freight trains on host-railroads' tracks in order to do this.

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Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Stanley

Last Name: Green

Mailing Address:

City: College Place

Country: United States

State or Province: WA

ZIP/Postal Code: 99324

Email Address:

Organization Name:

Comment: Maintaining the on-time performance is crucial to the environmental and economic benefits of intercity passenger transportation.

I ride Amtrak several times per year in Washington and California.

Stations I use include Seattle and Mt. Vernon, WA as well as Los Angeles, Glendale, and Burbank Airport, CA.

I count on Amtrak service to get me to meetings on time and to make connections to surface and air transportation to which I might be connecting.

Maintaining the on-time performance is crucial to the environmental and economic benefits of intercity passenger transportation.

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RIN:

Publish Date: 12/28/2015 12:00:00 AM

Submitter Info:

First Name: Paul

Last Name: Logan

Mailing Address:

City: Springfield

Country:

State or Province: Virginia

ZIP/Postal Code: 22151

Email Address: anoldlog@yahoo.com

Organization Name:

Comment: On more than one trip returning from vacation travel to Denver,we have missed connections in Chicago to the direct train back to Washington

because the our train was far behind schedule. We were forced to travel more round about routes home. Trains on those routes also suffered delays. So we ended up getting home seven to twelve hours later than we expected. The railroads should be required to allow passenger trains to stay on schedule to prevent such problems.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Ron

Last Name: Troy

Mailing Address: 2 CRYSTAL LN

City: EAST NORTHPORT

Country: United States

State or Province: NY

ZIP/Postal Code: 11731

Email Address: rtroy56@gmail.com

Organization Name: National Association of Rail Passengers

Comment: In recent years on-time performance by Amtrak where it is hosted by other railroads has often become a bad joke. Passenger trains are relatively short and fast, but need predictable timing at decent speeds to be viable. Amtrak trains must have priority over freight and other traffic nearly all of the time on a host railroad. From time to time maintenance must be done, but should be in a way that minimizes its effect on Amtrak and its passengers.

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Submitter Info:

First Name: Tom and Sharon

Last Name: Sharratt

Mailing Address:

City:

Country: United States

State or Province: WI

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Organization Name: NARP/WisARP/MnARP

Comment: We live in SW Wisconsin (near LaCrosse) and use AMTRAK to get to a variety of destinations every year (Washington DC, New Orleans, Portland, San Francisco and San Antonio within the past two years as well as more frequent trips to Chicago and St. Paul.) While we often travel for leisure, but it usually is for business. Train delays are an ever present danger and can result in missed connections or meetings. While some delays are unavoidable (accidents, track work and weather), often it is a matter of a decision by a dispatcher.

We strongly urge that the STB continue to place emphasis/priority on giving passenger trains priority over freights, and penalizing railroads that do not do so. People are as perishable and important as most freight, and should be given priority whenever possible.

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