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Docket #: EP -726 -0 -
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Message: Please see attached PDF with comments

Public Comment: Docket # EP-726-0

Re: Standard for the determination of on-time performance of passenger rail.

As a frequent Amtrak rider of their long-distance services I usually experience lengthy delays (often serious) in its use. The traveler must allow much additional travel time as there is often no surety on when the train will arrive. This also causes a level of aggravation and uncertainty by friends or family meeting a train as to when to start the journey to the station, or long waits for a late train to arrive. It also causes great anxiety when a rail connection is required and then dealing with the attendant problems from a missed connection, which can often be days, since the service is at minimum, daily. Thus the on-time (or at least reasonable) performance of Amtrak is very important to me for the reasons stated above.

My understanding is that by congressional mandate freight railroads that Amtrak utilizes must give Amtrak trains priority of movement in order to reasonably maintain a schedule. However, my experience has been that this is often not the case and the train sits waiting on freight traffic or is slowed due freight being given priority.

A standard has been set in the airline industry that a flight is considered on-time if arrives within 15 minutes of scheduled arrival which is applied uniformly to all portions of a route, even if there is a stop-over. I believe the same standard should be applied to all points of an Amtrak journey and not just the end points of a trip. The majority of passengers (at least via rail) do not start their journey at the same location as the train has started. Nor are they likely to still be with the train at the end point but have ridden somewhere along the route. On-time performance is just important for that passenger as to those that started or finished the full route of the train.

Therefore, the proposed standard of having the train be considered "on-time" if it is within certain number of minutes based on the route's length does not make sense and should be rethought. Unless a reasonably consistent standard for a train's entire route is mandated and the freight railroads held accountable, there will be no meaningful incentive for the them to seek improvement in Amtrak's on-time performance.

Thank you for allowing me to express my opinion regarding the proposed on-time standard for passenger rail. My hope is that genuine improvement will be coming in the future.

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