RUN
RAIL
USERS'
NETWORK

June 21, 2020

Dear RUN members.

URGENT!

-Amtrak has recently announced that most long-distance trains will be cut back to three-day-a-week service as of Oct. 1.

-After July 4 there will no longer be two daily trains to Florida. (Auto Train not included)

We need your help convincing Amtrak not to cut back services!!

Please be aware of these points when contacting your Legislators!

-Congress has provided $1.475 billion dollars to Amtrak through the passage of the Cares Act to cover revenue lost resulting from decreased ridership during the Covid 19 Crisis. Lost revenue is not a legitimate reason to cut services.

-Amtrak President William Flynn has deep ties to the airline industry which will benefit from the service reduction, as they serve the same customer base. This represents a potential conflict-of-loyalties, which must be given oversight and scrutiny.

-The proposal to introduce "less-than-daily" service on all long-distance routes except the Auto-Train in FY 2021 smacks of a conscious effort to dismantle the national system altogether.

-Reduction of schedules in the 1990's cost Amtrak more in lost revenue than it was able to gain from lesser expenses, given the fixed cost nature of the operation.

-Ridership is coming back: long-distance ticket revenues climbed 71%, from $6.8 million to $11.6 million, between April and May, operating with approximately the same frequencies, Northeast Corridor billing rose about 60% from $1.5 million to $2.4 million, and state-supported trains generated less than a 50% increase, from $2.3 million in April to $3.5 million in May. "The existing long-distance service provided almost double the May revenue of Corridor and state-supported operations combined."

RUN's Board of Directors is reaching out to Representative Peter Defazio, the Chair of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, as well as Senator Roger Wicker who chairs the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, to express our concerns on behalf of rail passengers across America.

We need your help! Please contact your congressional representatives and U.S senators. Political action is key, as members of Congress and the Senate have not only the authority, but

also the responsibility to make sure that Amtrak operates in the public interest. Please call or write to your elected officials. Ask them to reach out to their counterparts, especially those who represent voters who live in rural America, where daily train service is vital.
Here are some additional points that can be used to convey your concerns regarding Amtrak's long-distance train service:

1. As the pandemic eases, cutting service is absolutely the wrong message to send to bring customers back to Amtrak.

2. Amtrak has gotten a lot of federal money, so where is it going if service is getting cut nationwide?

3. All trains should be DAILY! A customer should not have to consult a calendar to see if their train is running on any given day!

4. States have contributed a lot of money to have their trains run between important centers of commerce and education. If service cuts are allowed to occur, will States be getting refunds?

5. Trains are one of the chief links between large cities and small towns all across the US. By cutting long-distance trains back to tri-weekly, isn't that a not-so-subliminal message that residents and visitors to small towns don't really matter?

6. Rural areas served by Amtrak have little bus or air service.

7. Dispersed populations (small towns) are a way to minimize the impact of the coronavirus on the population, but to encourage such lifestyles, transportation choices are needed.

8. Our main economic competitor, which is rapidly overtaking the USA, China, is building thousands of miles of intercity passenger railroads and launching hundreds of passenger trains every year.

9. Daily long-distance passenger rail service is an alternative which provides a safe, smooth all- weather ride; is popular with all ages, classes and colors of people, and serves a as a brake on climate change.

Please let us know when you have contacted your elected officials, either through a phone call or email to their staff member(s) who deals with transportation issues.

This is a RUN call-to-action and gives us the opportunity to express our vision and show our strength.

Thank you very much. Be well and stay safe.

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