Mexican president says he will require freight rail operators to offer passenger service

Government will operate trains if concession holders CPKC de Mexico, Grupo Mexico decline



A KCS de Mexico intermodal train makes its way through Comonfort, Mexico. CPKC de Mexico could either be forced to operate passenger trains or allow government trains on its routes under a new decree from President Andrés Manuel López Obador. Ian M. Contreras

MEXICO CITY — Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said Wednesday that he will issue a decree requiring the nation's freight rail operators to offer passenger service or to allow government-operated passenger trains to run on their routes.

Reuters reports Lopez Obrador made the announcement at a Wednesday press conference. A clause in the concession agreements for CPKC de

Mexico and Grupo Mexico allow for the railways to be used for passenger service and give the concession holders preference to operate the service. The Associated Press reports he disputed a suggestion that the move amounted to expropriation of private property: "This is not an expropriation, it is in the Constitution and the law," he said. "According to the law, passenger trains have priority."

Virtually no regular passenger service currently operates in Mexico.

López Obrador also said the railway network would have to be electrified to accommodate passenger service. The cost of such an undertaking was not mentioned, nor was the prospect of government subsidies for the passenger service, or the operating issues to result from introducing passenger service to currently freight-only routes.

Earlier this year, the government seized a line operated by Grupo Mexico's Ferrosur, saying it needed the line to complete a route connecting ports on the Pacific Coast and the Gulf of Mexico. The government later extended Ferrosur's concession for eight years in compensation for the move [see "Mexican government announces deal ...," *Trains* News Wire, June 2, 2023].