

**House Report 107-722 - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND  
RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2003**

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**ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF HON. DAVID R. OBEY AND HON.  
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The creation of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), requiring billions of general taxpayer dollars, has put a strain on funding for traditional transportation infrastructure programs. The Amtrak funding proposed in the bill is a prime example of this strain. Both Amtrak and TSA should be adequately funded. Unfortunately, Amtrak is shortchanged.

Amtrak is funded at \$762 million--\$438 million, or 36%, less than the \$1.2 billion both Amtrak and the DOT Inspector General say that Amtrak needs in fiscal year 2003. Amtrak President David Gunn has said ` . . . that should \$762 million be the final amount enacted. Amtrak will run out of money early in 2003, and we will again be faced with another shutdown crisis.'

The DOT Inspector General has written. ` Without changes to the structure of the system or additional capital funding from other sources, the reliability of Amtrak service in 2003 is likely at risk, and this risk will rise as the level of Federal or other funding declines [below the \$1.2 billion].

In 2002, Amtrak's appropriations totaled \$831 million from the Federal Government (the regular appropriation of \$521 million, a \$100 million loan from DOT that must be paid back, and \$205 million and \$5 million in the emergency supplemental). Amtrak also had use of \$313 million, appropriated in 2001, but not available until 2002.

The funding that is provided to Amtrak in 2003 in the committee bill is 8% less than what was appropriated in 2002 and 25% less than what was available to Amtrak from the Federal government in 2002. And Amtrak's maintenance needs have grown.

Unfortunately, the Bush Administration has not shown leadership on Amtrak. The Administration has asked for meaningful reforms for Amtrak, but has yet to submit any specific legislative proposals to the Congress. The President's appointees in the Department of Transportation have also admitted that if the President's Budget request of \$521 million were enacted Amtrak would cease to exist.

At the \$762 million funding level contained in the committee bill, the Congress will be back next February needing to provide more funding to Amtrak to get it through the year, just as it did last July when the emergency supplemental was enacted.

A manager's amendment adopted in full committee deleted a provision in the bill that would have provided no federal funding, beginning in July, to all routes where the per passenger subsidy is over \$200. Instead, the bill now caps the federal funding that can be provided for long distance trains at \$150 million. As the old saying goes, a hose of another color is still a horse.

The fact is that Amtrak cannot run all existing long distance trains on \$150 million. So some, if not all, long distance trains will have to be discontinued. Some have estimated that this will impact 13 of the 18 long distance Amtrak trains, including:

*The Sunset Limited* from Orlando to Los Angeles via Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans, Houston, San Antonio and Tucson;  
*The Pennsylvania* from Philadelphia to Chicago via Harrisburg, Cleveland, Toledo, and Pittsburgh;  
*The Texas Eagle* from Chicago to Los Angeles via Springfield, St. Louis, Little Rock, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, and Tucson;  
*The Three Rivers* from New York to Chicago via Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh;  
*The Southwest Chief* from Chicago to Los Angeles via Kansas City, Topeka, Albuquerque, and Flagstaff;  
*The Kentucky Cardinal* from Chicago to Louisville via Indianapolis;  
*The Cardinal* from Washington to Chicago via Charleston, WV, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis;  
*The Capitol Limited* from Washington to Chicago via Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Toledo;  
*The California Zephyr* from Chicago to Oakland via Omaha, Lincoln, Denver, Salt Lake City, Reno, and Sacramento;  
*The Lake Shore Limited* from New York to Chicago via Albany, Syracuse, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Toledo;  
*The Crescent* from New York to New Orleans via Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Greensboro, Charlotte, Greenville, Atlanta, and Birmingham;  
*The Silver Palm* from New York to Miami via Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Richmond, Charleston, SC, Savannah, Jacksonville, Tampa, and Ft. Lauderdale; and  
*The City of New Orleans* from Chicago to New Orleans via Memphis.

It is also a fact that a \$762 million funding level could negatively impact other Amtrak service. Amtrak's maintenance backlog will grow, more trains will be put out of service and scheduled service will be delayed or canceled.

This is not the kind of train service that the American people expect and deserve, and such a prospect flies in the face of the ridership gains that Amtrak has made over the past five years.

It also ignores the critical role that Amtrak played following the September 11 attacks. After September 11, travelers turned to Amtrak as an alternative to flying. If Amtrak had not existed on September 11, just think of the transportation nightmare we would have experienced. Further, many of the travelers on the Northeast Corridor who used Amtrak after September 11 continue to do so.

Congress is now faced with the decision of whether to fund Amtrak properly or eliminate it. It's really as simple as that. We think that the choice is clear: Amtrak should be funded at \$1.2 billion.

David Obey.

Martin O. Sabo.

