



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.
Washington, D.C. 20590

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

OCT 15 2010

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Section 154 of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010 (Pub. L. 111-117) requires the Federal Railroad Administrator to "submit a report on April 1, 2010, and quarterly reports thereafter, to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations detailing the Administrator's efforts at improving the on-time performance of Amtrak intercity rail service operating on non-Amtrak owned property. Such reports shall compare the most recent actual on-time performance data to pre-established on-time performance goals that the Administrator shall set for each rail service, identified by route. Such reports shall also include whatever other information and data regarding the on-time performance of Amtrak trains the Administrator deems to be appropriate."

I am pleased to submit the quarterly report in accordance with this requirement. I hope that the information contained in the enclosed report will assist the Committee in its work.

Identical letters have been sent to the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, and to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Szabo

Enclosures

October 1, 2010

**October 2010 Report on Amtrak On-Time Performance
Submitted by the Federal Railroad Administrator
Under Section 154 of Pub. L. 111-117**

This report includes two sections: (1) an update on recent Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) efforts to catalyze and effect improvements in Amtrak's on-time performance (OTP); and (2) in keeping with the FRA's July 1, 2010 OTP report, an update on Amtrak's OTP results and performance against FRA-established goals.

(1) OTP Improvement Highlights through August Fiscal Year 2010

OTP Benefits of the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program: On January 28, 2010, the Obama Administration announced the first round of selected programs and projects in 31 States under the FRA's HSIPR Program. Through the States, this program is providing a total of approximately \$10.6 billion (appropriations through FY 2010) for incremental upgrades to existing railroads as well as new high-speed rail systems, all for the purpose of endowing the Nation with a transformative mode of intercity passenger transportation in heavily populated corridors.

Most of the HSIPR awards will ultimately raise the effective speed of the benefiting services, through a combination of better reliability (through capacity additions and other means) and/or higher running speeds. Accordingly, the completion of the first round of FRA's HSIPR betterments will directly improve the OTP of the affected routes, as measured in this series of OTP reports to Congress as well as the forthcoming reports under Section 207 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA).

For example, the FRA and State of Vermont have signed a \$50 million HSIPR grant for rehabilitating the rail line between Brattleboro and St. Albans, VT, which is traversed by the Amtrak *Vermont* service. The installation of new rail and roadbed work along this segment will result in a 27 minute trip time reduction in the *Vermont*'s schedule and an intrastate on-time performance of 90 percent—5.5 points better than the route's overall performance to date in FY 2010, as reported in the table below. Not only will the effective speed and endpoint OTP benefit in this illustrative route, but the operational and reliability improvements will also set the stage for higher passenger rail frequencies along this corridor and for extending the *Vermont* service to Montreal, Quebec. Many more concrete examples of the HSIPR Program's OTP impact could be cited; a complete list of selected investments is available at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/hsr_awards_summary_public.pdf.

Publication of Metrics and Standards: On May 12, 2010, the FRA published the final Metrics and Standards for intercity passenger rail services, which it had developed jointly with Amtrak in compliance with Section 207 of the PRIIA. Available on FRA's webpage at <http://www.fra.dot.gov/Pages/2165.shtml>, these Metrics and Standards address OTP in detail, along with financial and customer satisfaction data. PRIIA Section 207 also requires the FRA to

publish a quarterly report comparing the performance of all intercity passenger rail services with the final Metrics and Standards; the first such report, covering the quarter ending September 30, 2010, will be published after all data for that quarter are available. The FRA believes that the quarterly Metrics and Standards reports, with their augmented detail, coupled with related provisions in other sections of the PRIIA (e.g., Sections 210 and 213), will provide additional impetus for the host railroads and Amtrak to emphasize their collaborative efforts toward OTP improvement.

Other Recent OTP Developments: Stemming from the increased Federal attention that has been given to Amtrak's OTP as well as the development of performance improvement plans between Amtrak and host freight railroads, Amtrak has achieved improved levels of on-time performance over the last year and a half, particularly among its long distance trains. These improvements in reliability have allowed Amtrak to shorten the trip time of some its long distance trains. Compared to the fall 2009 schedules, the current Amtrak published timetable, which went into effect in May 2010, includes a 10 minute trip time reduction in the westbound *Sunset Limited*, a 20 minute trip time reduction in the westbound *Cardinal* service, a 20 minute trip time reduction in the westbound *Southwest Chief*, and a 30 minute trip time reduction in the eastbound *Lake Shore Limited*.

(2) Goals and Route Performance

Attachment A contains updated OTP statistics for all Amtrak routes for FY 2010 through August. As the attachment illustrates, approximately half of the routes (20) have had improvements in OTP (in terms of both improved percent on time and no decrease in effective speed) through August 2010. Of those routes experiencing OTP improvement, a total of ten (five corridor-type and five long-distance trains) are meeting, or are surpassing, their FRA-defined OTP target for FY 2010.

The OTP across the entire Amtrak system through August FY 2010 was 79.4 percent, which is less than a percentage-point decrease from the previous year. The slight decline in system-wide performance primarily reflected the OTP experience in the Northeast Corridor (NEC), which was the site of considerable infrastructure renewal activity during FY 2010. By contrast, Amtrak's short distance routes outside the NEC (i.e. "Other Corridor Services") experienced a 1.3 percentage-point increase year-over-year (for an average endpoint OTP of 81.5 percent) while the long-distance trains experienced a 0.6 percentage-point increase over the previous year (for an average endpoint OTP of 74.8 percent). Further highlighting the extent of the route-by-route fiscal year improvements, compared to the previous year, approximately one-quarter of Amtrak's routes have had endpoint OTP increases of ten percentage-points or greater.

Considerable momentum for improving Amtrak's OTP was achieved in FY 2009 and notable OTP improvements have been made across the Amtrak system in FY 2010. This momentum can only gain strength from further cooperation between Amtrak and the freight railroads, the implementation of the Metrics and Standards under Section 207 of PRIIA, and the ongoing implementation of the selected State-sponsored investments under the FRA's HSIPR program.

Attachment A
Amtrak On-Time Performance for FY 2010
Year-to-Date Totals through August

	✓ Indicates both tests were met for OTP Progress	Test 1: Higher Percent On Time YTD - August 2010 vs. YTD - August 2009				Test 2: Constant or Better Effective Speed
		FY10 % On Time	% Change from FY09	Proposed Target for FY10	% Variance from FY10 Target	Change in MPH from October 2007 Baseline
<i>Northeast Corridor Service (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 95%)</i>						
Acela		79.9%	(7.1%)	92.1%	(12.2%)	(2.1)
Regional Service		74.1%	(5.4%)	88.2%	(14.1%)	(1.2)
<i>Other Corridor Services (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 90% Minimum target proposed for FY 2010: 80%)</i>						
Adirondack	✓	61.2%	5.3%	80.0%	(18.8%)	2.0
Blue Water	✓	69.1%	18.4%	80.0%	(10.9%)	2.0
Capitols	✓	92.8%	0.6%	83.8%	8.9%	1.6
Carolinian		47.0%	(10.3%)	80.0%	(33.0%)	1.1
Cascades	✓	72.0%	0.9%	80.0%	(8.0%)	0.8
Downeaster		70.4%	(3.3%)	85.2%	(14.8%)	(0.9)
Empire Service		85.4%	3.0%	82.7%	2.7%	(3.6)
Ethan Allen Express		74.6%	20.3%	80.0%	(5.4%)	(0.5)
Heartland Flyer	✓	83.3%	0.4%	80.0%	3.3%	4.9
Hiawatha		89.3%	1.9%	89.7%	(0.4%)	(0.3)
Hoosier State	✓	75.9%	24.2%	80.0%	(4.1%)	2.0
Illini		62.4%	13.9%	81.6%	(19.2%)	(0.1)
Illinois Zephyr	✓	92.5%	4.8%	80.1%	12.4%	1.9
Keystone		86.6%	(3.1%)	88.1%	(1.5%)	(0.5)
Lincoln Service	✓	73.1%	0.8%	80.0%	(6.9%)	2.0
Maple Leaf	✓	68.8%	9.3%	80.0%	(11.2%)	1.0
Missouri Services	✓	90.9%	19.1%	80.0%	10.9%	6.8
Pacific Surfliner		76.5%	(6.6%)	83.9%	(7.4%)	0.1
Pennsylvanian		90.0%	(6.1%)	82.6%	7.4%	1.1
Pere Marquette	✓	54.5%	18.7%	80.0%	(25.5%)	2.0
Piedmont		77.7%	2.2%	83.7%	(6.1%)	(0.5)
San Joaquins	✓	90.6%	0.6%	81.2%	9.4%	2.0
Vermont		84.5%	(3.9%)	80.0%	4.5%	0.4
Wolverines	✓	63.0%	20.0%	80.0%	(17.0%)	1.7
<i>Long Distance Trains (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 85% Minimum target proposed for FY 2010: 72.5%)</i>						
Auto Train		87.0%	(1.1%)	75.8%	11.2%	1.1
California Zephyr		52.7%	(5.5%)	72.5%	(19.8%)	4.5
Capitol Limited		69.4%	(0.3%)	72.5%	(3.1%)	3.0
Cardinal	✓	51.6%	6.0%	72.5%	(20.9%)	0.1
City of New Orleans		83.2%	0.6%	85.0%	(1.8%)	(0.1)
Coast Starlight	✓	89.9%	8.4%	72.5%	17.4%	2.1
Crescent		72.8%	(11.7%)	72.5%	0.3%	0.7
Empire Builder	✓	77.4%	2.9%	80.4%	(2.9%)	0.0
Lake Shore Limited	✓	76.6%	1.9%	72.5%	4.1%	4.4
Palmetto		63.5%	(3.4%)	72.5%	(9.0%)	3.3
Silver Meteor	✓	73.0%	1.7%	72.5%	0.5%	1.6
Silver Star	✓	77.2%	11.2%	72.5%	4.7%	1.6
Southwest Chief		80.1%	(4.7%)	75.1%	5.1%	0.7
Sunset Limited	✓	88.2%	9.8%	72.5%	15.7%	4.1
Texas Eagle		70.1%	(3.2%)	72.5%	(2.4%)	1.9