



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

MAY 4 2012

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Section 152 of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Full Committee Draft Report, 2012 directs the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to “submit a report on April 1, 2012, and quarterly reports thereafter on Amtrak’s on time performance.” As previously directed, these reports are to be made to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations detailing the Administrator's efforts to improve the on-time performance of Amtrak intercity rail service operating on non-Amtrak owned property. Such reports are to compare the most recent actual on-time performance data to pre-established on-time performance goals that the Administrator had set for each rail service, identified by route. Such reports are also to 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 Congressional direction. 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
Administrator

Enclosures

**Amtrak On-Time Performance (OTP) Report
(As Described in Section 154 of Pub. L. 111-117)**

This report includes (1) an update on recent Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) efforts to improve Amtrak's on-time performance and (2) Amtrak's OTP results and performance against FRA-established goals.

(1) OTP Highlights through the First Quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2012

OTP Benefits of the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program: During the first quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, Secretary La Hood announced the awarding of an additional eight project grants across the country through the FY 2010 HSIPR program. These recent announcements bring the total number of projects to 147 as of the end of the quarter, with a total obligation amount of approximately \$9.4 billion (a complete list of selected investments is available at: <http://www.fra.dot.gov/rpd/HSIPR/ProjectFunding.aspx>).

STB Investigation Under PRIIA Section 213: On January 19, 2012, Amtrak filed a petition with the Surface Transportation Board ("STB"), requesting an investigation into the causes of the high level of delays to Amtrak trains running on Canadian National ("CN") tracks and making recommendations as to how delays can be reduced. The PRIIA statute passed in 2008 included a new provision giving the STB the ability to investigate the causes of poor Amtrak train performance, and this is the first petition Amtrak has filed on this issue. Amtrak took this step only after years of discussions with CN to reduce delays proved to be unsuccessful.

Ethan Allen Service – Vermont Railway Operational Performance Improvement Program (OPIP): In early 2011, Amtrak advised the Vermont Railway System (VRS) of the need to substantially reduce delays to the Ethan Allen service operating over VRS. As of December 2010, Host-Responsible Delays on VRS were 11,068 minutes per 10,000 train miles, relative to the PRIIA Section 207 standard of 900 minutes per 10,000 train miles. Slow orders due to track conditions on the route accounted for 91% of these delay minutes.

Amtrak and VRS met on a regular basis throughout 2011 in order to develop and implement an action plan to improve the track conditions and implement other improvements. The team developed a corrective plan along with a review and monitoring process for the delays to the Ethan Allen Service on the VRS territory. VRS successfully addressed nearly all of the slow orders along the route. As a result, in December 2011, VRS Responsible Delays had been reduced 99%, down to 135 minutes per 10,000 train miles, well within the 900 minute standard. As a result of the reduction in slow orders, the Ethan Allen Express's scheduled trip time was reduced by 15 minutes for southbound trains and by 25 minutes for northbound trains.

Texas Eagle Operational Performance Improvement Program: Amtrak and Union Pacific have been working since July 2011 on an effort to reduce delays on the Texas Eagle service. The joint team's efforts thus far have included operational

improvements such as a new departure protocol at the Ft. Worth, TX station, and slow order improvements. The team's next steps include issuance of a monthly scorecard to track progress, and a focus on performance at intermediate stations.

I-95 Corridor Operational Performance Improvement Program: Amtrak and CSX continue their ongoing efforts to improve the performance of services in the I-95 corridor through the Atlantic Coast States between the Northeast and Florida. Recent initiatives have included an emphasis on delays at stations due to issues involving boarding and detraining passengers. The team also has identified, and communicated to dispatchers, the optimal station tracks and crossover locations to minimize delays in multiple-track territory; this effort is expected to reduce host-responsible delays as well as Amtrak-responsible station dwell delays. As a result of these efforts, in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012, the Palmetto and Silver Meteor services on CSX met the PRIIA Section 207 standards for host-responsible delays and Amtrak-responsible delays. The Silver Star service on CSX met the standard for host-responsible delays and exceeded the standard for Amtrak-responsible delays by only 1 minute per 10,000 train miles. The Carolinian and Northeast Regional services also have experienced significant improvements. The team's next focus will be on the Carolinian and Northeast Regional services.

Publication of Metrics and Standards: Jointly with Amtrak, FRA developed and published on May 12, 2010, the Metrics and Standards for intercity passenger rail services as required by Section 207 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). The fifth quarterly Metrics and Standards report under Section 207 is available on FRA's webpage at www.fra.dot.gov/Pages/2165.shtml. The latest report provides data on Amtrak's financial, operational, and service quality performance for the fourth quarter of FY 2011. A key feature of the operational information is the tabulation of delay minutes that Amtrak experiences on the host railroads for each route. The data collected for the fourth quarter of FY 2011 illustrate Amtrak's reliability experiences across its system, with host railroads exceeding applicable standards for delay minutes on most of the Amtrak routes.

(2) Goals and Route Performance

Attachment A contains OTP statistics for all Amtrak routes through the first quarter of FY 2012. The table provides three pieces of information for each route: 1) progress made toward target goals established in 2008, 2) a comparison between FY 2011 results and the prior year, and 3) the change in effective speed. Effective speed is defined as a metric that uses the scheduled departure time from the origination point of a train, the actual arrival time of that train at the scheduled endpoint, and the normal mileage that the train operates between the normal scheduled origination point and the normal scheduled arrival point. Throughout the history of this OTP report, progress has been focused on the latter two metrics.

As the attachment illustrates, nineteen routes out of forty-one had better OTP (in terms of both a higher percent on time versus last year and no decrease in effective speed)

through December of FY 2012. Of those routes experiencing OTP improvement, seven (three corridor-type and four long-distance train) are also meeting, or are surpassing, their FRA-defined OTP target for FY 2012. While the OTP for each of Amtrak's lines of business (the Northeast Corridor (NEC), other short-distance corridors, and long-distance routes) has risen over the previous year, the Northeast Corridor has shown the most improvement.

Underlying much of the enhanced OTP is a reduction in host railroad-responsible train delays. While these favorable developments will inevitably reflect conditions that are site-specific to each route and host railroad, Amtrak's publicly-available Monthly Performance Reports (MPRs) point to generally applicable reasons for the improving performance.¹ For the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012 (ending December 31, 2011), total delay minutes were down by 10 percent from those of the prior quarter (ending September 30, 2011). Reductions in slow-orders (temporary speed restrictions, usually due to track conditions) accounted for over half of the improvement.

Interestingly, this progress occurred amidst higher freight traffic levels on the Nation's railroads: On a year-over-year calendar basis through the end of December 2011, cumulative freight carloads throughout the national rail system were up 2.2 percent or over 300,000 cars, and intermodal units were up 5.4 percent or 609,000 units.

¹ The Monthly Performance Reports are available on the Internet at <http://www.amtrak.com/servlet/ContentServer/Page/1241245669222/1241245669129>. Data are from the chart entitled "Delay Minutes Performance Report - Summary."

Attachment A
Amtrak On-Time Performance: 1st Quarter of FY 2012
(data covers October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011)

			Test 1: On-Time Percentage (compared to prior year period)		Test 2: Constant or Better Effective Speed	✓ Indicates both tests were met for OTP Progress
	FY 2012 OTP Target	Change from OTP Target	Amtrak OTP	Change from Prior Year	Change in MPH from October 2008 Baseline for Last 4 Quarters	
Northeast Corridor Service (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 95%)						
Acela	95.0%	(4.8%)	90.2%	6.1%	(0.1)	
Regional Service	95.0%	(9.2%)	85.8%	4.3%	(0.4)	
Other Corridor Services (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 90%)						
Adirondack	90.0%	(15.5%)	74.5%	(3.8%)	1.3	
Blue Water	90.0%	(31.5%)	58.5%	(8.4%)	3.1	
Capitols	90.0%	4.1%	94.1%	(1.4%)	1.8	
Carolinian	90.0%	(13.9%)	76.1%	16.8%	1.8	✓
Cascades	90.0%	(12.4%)	77.6%	0.6%	0.9	✓
Downeaster	90.0%	(9.2%)	80.8%	(4.0%)	(0.0)	
Empire Service	90.0%	2.2%	92.2%	6.9%	2.9	✓
Ethan Allen Express	90.0%	(21.0%)	69.0%	7.1%	1.2	✓
Heartland Flyer	90.0%	(14.5%)	75.5%	(8.7%)	2.4	
Hiawatha	90.0%	1.6%	91.6%	5.4%	0.6	✓
Hoosier State	90.0%	(26.5%)	63.5%	4.0%	2.0	✓
Illini	90.0%	(15.3%)	74.7%	30.2%	3.0	✓
Illinois Zephyr	90.0%	(2.8%)	87.2%	(1.4%)	0.7	
Keystone	90.0%	(0.8%)	89.2%	3.0%	0.1	✓
Lincoln Service	90.0%	(14.7%)	75.3%	10.5%	3.3	✓
Maple Leaf	90.0%	(11.7%)	78.3%	10.9%	1.2	✓
Missouri Services	90.0%	(0.9%)	89.1%	(2.4%)	8.0	
Pacific Surfliner	90.0%	(13.1%)	76.9%	(0.9%)	0.1	
Pennsylvanian	90.0%	2.9%	92.9%	3.2%	0.5	✓
Pere Marquette	90.0%	(38.4%)	51.6%	(2.7%)	2.9	
Piedmont	90.0%	(16.9%)	73.1%	(5.7%)	0.7	
San Joaquin	90.0%	(1.6%)	88.4%	(3.0%)	1.0	
Vermonteer	90.0%	(9.0%)	81.0%	(2.2%)	2.2	
Wolverines	90.0%	(59.2%)	30.8%	(10.5%)	0.9	
Long Distance Trains (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 85%)						
Auto Train	85.0%	5.8%	90.8%	0.5%	1.7	✓
California Zephyr	85.0%	(52.4%)	32.6%	(18.5%)	2.5	
Capitol Limited	85.0%	(30.7%)	54.3%	(3.3%)	1.2	
Cardinal	85.0%	(30.6%)	54.4%	12.7%	1.1	✓
City of New Orleans	85.0%	(0.2%)	84.8%	15.2%	1.2	✓
Coast Starlight	85.0%	0.9%	85.9%	7.7%	1.2	✓
Crescent	85.0%	3.0%	88.0%	11.4%	0.8	✓
Empire Builder	85.0%	(18.8%)	66.2%	14.4%	(0.1)	
Lake Shore Limited	85.0%	(19.1%)	65.9%	(3.9%)	1.2	
Palmetto	85.0%	0.3%	85.3%	9.8%	1.6	✓
Silver Meteor	85.0%	(6.7%)	78.3%	(1.6%)	0.6	
Silver Star	85.0%	(8.4%)	76.6%	2.7%	1.2	✓
Southwest Chief	85.0%	(16.0%)	69.0%	(14.1%)	(0.4)	
Sunset Limited	85.0%	(11.9%)	73.1%	(16.8%)	0.1	
Texas Eagle	85.0%	(6.2%)	78.8%	8.7%	3.1	✓