



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Railroad
Administration

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

APR 15 2011

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
Administrator

Enclosures

April 2011 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 January 1, 2011 OTP report, an update on Amtrak's OTP results and performance against FRA-established goals.

(1) OTP Highlights through March of Fiscal Year (FY) 2011

OTP Benefits of the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program: The FRA continues to advance projects selected for funding under the FRA's HSIPR Program.¹ 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. As just one example, the FRA and State of Washington, with the support of the freight host railroad BNSF, recently signed a \$590 million HSIPR grant for a series of investments on the Seattle-Portland corridor that will improve reliability as a result of betterments to the existing rail and signal infrastructure, in addition to providing capacity for additional frequencies, incremental speed increases, and reduced trip times for the Amtrak *Cascades* service. Similar benefits will accrue from HSIPR investments in many other corridors.

Publication of Metrics and Standards: Stemming from the May 12, 2010 publication of the final Metrics and Standards for intercity passenger rail services, which FRA developed jointly with Amtrak in compliance with Section 207 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), FRA (with Amtrak's assistance) has published the first quarterly Metrics and Standards report, available on FRA's webpage at <http://www.fra.dot.gov/Pages/2165.shtml>. This report provides data on Amtrak's financial, operational, and service quality performance during the fourth quarter of FY 2010. A key feature of the operational information is the delay minutes Amtrak experiences on the host railroads for each route.

Metrics and Standards data collected for the fourth quarter of FY 2010 illustrate the spectrum of reliability Amtrak experiences across its system, with some Class I railroads exceeding the delay minutes standard on most, if not all of the Amtrak trains they host. Next to be published in this series will be the quarterly Metrics and Standards report with data collected for the first quarter of FY 2011.

Implementation of the Metrics and Standards:

Systemwide, Amtrak has been working with the host railroads to ensure that they are managing intercity passenger rail performance to the newly implemented Metrics and Standards. On the Southeast Corridor in particular, operations of the Amtrak *Silver Star*, *Silver Meteor*, and

¹ Complete lists of selected investments are available at: <http://www.fra.dot.gov/rpd/Downloads/hsiprapplist.pdf> and http://www.fra.dot.gov/rpd/downloads/Summary_of_FY10_Selected_Projects_1010.pdf—for selections under the American Recover and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and Fiscal Year 2010 appropriations, respectively.

Palmetto on host CSX met the standard for host-responsible delays in the fourth quarter of FY 2010. As such, Amtrak and CSX are focusing increasingly on improvements to the *Carolinian* and Northeast Regional services. In addition, Amtrak and CSX continue to discuss the removal of extra recovery time that was temporarily added to the *Auto Train* schedule in FY 2007.

The FRA believes that over the long term, the ongoing reporting of the quarterly Metrics and Standards, with their augmented detail, coupled with related provisions in other sections of the PRIIA, will provide additional impetus for the host railroads and Amtrak to emphasize their collaborative efforts toward OTP improvement.

(2) Goals and Route Performance

Attachment A contains OTP statistics for all Amtrak routes for the first quarter of FY 2011. As the attachment illustrates, a fifth of the routes (9) had improvements in OTP (in terms of both improved percent on time and no decrease in effective speed) through December of FY 2011. Of those routes experiencing OTP improvement, a total of three (one corridor-type and two long-distance trains) are meeting, or are surpassing, their FRA-defined OTP target for FY 2011. By contrast, four-fifths of the routes showed declining OTP, declining effective speed, or both.

The OTP across the entire Amtrak system through December FY 2011 was 79.5 percent, which is a two percentage-point decrease from the previous year. This decline in systemwide performance is largely attributable to the OTP experience of the long-distance trains, which declined by 10 percentage-points in the first quarter of FY 2011 compared to the previous year (for an average endpoint OTP of 69.8 percent). Further highlighting this downturn in OTP, 80 percent of the long-distance trains have experienced a year-over-year decline in on-time arrivals through December FY 2011.

Amtrak's short distance routes outside the NEC (i.e. "Other Corridor Services") experienced a smaller decline in OTP than the long-distance trains during the first quarter of the fiscal year (for a year-over-year decline of 2.2 percentage-points) and had an average endpoint OTP of 80.6 percent during the first quarter of FY 2011. However, similar to the long-distance trains, almost 80 percent of the short distance routes had year-over-year declines in on-time arrivals through December of this fiscal year. With freight rail traffic levels increasing in conjunction with the improving economy, additional focus and cooperation will be needed between Amtrak and the freight railroads to safeguard and improve the OTP of intercity passenger rail operations.

Attachment A
Amtrak On-Time Performance for FY 2011
Year-to-Date Totals for October 2010 through December 2010

| | ✓ Indicates both tests were met for OTP Progress | Test 1: Higher Percent On Time YTD - December 2010 vs. YTD - December 2009 | | | | Test 2: Constant or Better Effective Speed |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| | | FY11 % On Time | % Change from FY10 | Proposed Target for FY11 | % Variance from FY11 Target | Change in MPH from October 2008 Baseline |
| Northeast Corridor Service (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 95%) | | | | | | |
| Acela | | 84.1% | 0.7% | 93.6% | (9.5%) | (1.0) |
| Regional Service | | 76.6% | 1.1% | 91.6% | (15.0%) | (0.6) |
| Other Corridor Services (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 90%. Minimum target proposed for FY 2010: 80%) | | | | | | |
| Adirondack | ✓ | 78.3% | 6.0% | 85.0% | (6.7%) | 0.7 |
| Blue Water | ✓ | 68.8% | 0.9% | 85.0% | (16.2%) | 2.5 |
| Capitols | ✓ | 95.5% | 2.7% | 86.9% | 8.5% | 1.7 |
| Carolinian | | 59.2% | 2.2% | 85.0% | (25.8%) | (0.0) |
| Cascades | | 77.0% | (0.6%) | 85.0% | (8.0%) | 0.5 |
| Downeaster | | 84.8% | (1.2%) | 87.6% | (2.8%) | (0.3) |
| Empire Service | | 83.9% | (1.5%) | 86.3% | (2.4%) | 0.5 |
| Ethan Allen Express | | 62.0% | (18.5%) | 85.0% | (23.0%) | 0.4 |
| Heartland Flyer | | 84.2% | (7.6%) | 85.0% | (0.8%) | 3.1 |
| Hiawatha | | 86.2% | (4.5%) | 89.8% | (3.6%) | (0.4) |
| Hoosier State | | 59.4% | (18.5%) | 85.0% | (25.6%) | 2.2 |
| Illini | ✓ | 44.6% | 16.5% | 85.8% | (41.2%) | 2.4 |
| Illinois Zephyr | | 88.6% | (5.4%) | 85.0% | 3.5% | 1.3 |
| Keystone | | 86.2% | 2.5% | 89.1% | (2.8%) | (0.6) |
| Lincoln Service | | 64.8% | (13.5%) | 85.0% | (20.2%) | 2.1 |
| Maple Leaf | | 67.4% | (10.3%) | 85.0% | (17.6%) | 0.8 |
| Missouri Services | | 91.6% | (0.8%) | 85.0% | 6.6% | 8.2 |
| Pacific Surfliner | | 77.8% | (2.1%) | 87.0% | (9.1%) | 0.1 |
| Pennsylvanian | | 89.7% | (1.6%) | 86.3% | 3.4% | 0.0 |
| Pere Marquette | ✓ | 54.4% | 5.5% | 85.0% | (30.6%) | 2.8 |
| Piedmont | ✓ | 78.8% | 4.3% | 86.9% | (8.1%) | 1.2 |
| San Joaquins | | 91.4% | (0.5%) | 85.6% | 5.8% | 1.2 |
| Vermont | | 83.2% | (2.7%) | 85.0% | (1.8%) | 2.2 |
| Wolverines | | 41.3% | (24.5%) | 85.0% | (43.7%) | 2.2 |
| Long Distance Trains (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 85%. Minimum target proposed for FY 2010: 72.5%) | | | | | | |
| Auto Train | ✓ | 90.2% | 2.7% | 80.4% | 9.8% | 0.7 |
| California Zephyr | | 51.1% | (13.6%) | 78.8% | (27.7%) | 2.8 |
| Capitol Limited | | 57.6% | (18.5%) | 78.8% | (21.1%) | 1.6 |
| Cardinal | | 41.8% | (27.8%) | 78.8% | (37.0%) | 0.9 |
| City of New Orleans | | 69.6% | (6.0%) | 85.0% | (15.4%) | 1.1 |
| Coast Starlight | | 78.1% | (7.7%) | 78.8% | (0.6%) | 1.3 |
| Crescent | | 76.6% | (3.3%) | 78.8% | (2.1%) | 0.0 |
| Empire Builder | | 51.8% | (26.7%) | 82.7% | (30.9%) | (0.1) |
| Lake Shore Limited | | 69.8% | (15.5%) | 78.8% | (8.9%) | 1.1 |
| Palmetto | ✓ | 75.5% | 3.0% | 78.8% | (3.2%) | 0.2 |
| Silver Meteor | ✓ | 79.9% | 5.4% | 78.8% | 1.1% | 0.3 |
| Silver Star | | 73.9% | (6.5%) | 78.8% | (4.8%) | 1.0 |
| Southwest Chief | | 83.2% | (7.1%) | 80.0% | 3.1% | 0.4 |
| Sunset Limited | | 89.9% | (2.5%) | 78.8% | 11.1% | 3.0 |
| Texas Eagle | | 70.1% | (10.3%) | 78.8% | (8.6%) | 2.9 |