



# Washington Rail News

June/July 1991

Publication of the Washington Association of Railroad Passengers  
A Not-for-profit Consumer Organization  
"...getting the Pacific Northwest on the right track."

## Senate bill proposes full surface transportation funding flexibility

Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D-NY) unveiled S. 965, the Senate's highway/transit re-authorization, on April 26. His proposal could allow up to half the bill's \$90 billion over five years to be spent on non-highway projects. The possibly \$45 billion could be spent for "capital and operating costs for mass transit, rail and magnetic levitation systems including expenditures on rights-of-way and associated facilities."

It appears that Amtrak-

Moynihan's list of cosponsors: Committee Chair Quentin Burdick (D-ND); John Chafee (R-RI) and Steven Symms (R-ID), ranking Republicans on the full committee and subcommittee, respectively; and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation.

There are also two important bills before the House of Representatives:

- o H.R. 1605, which lets states use highway funds for transit or rail projects

## At last! New Superliners Ordered!

Amtrak, on April 22, signed a \$340 mill. contract with Bombardier Corp. of Quebec for 140 new bi-level long-distance Superliners. Delivery will start around July 1993 and conclude in late 1995. These are Amtrak's first new long-distance cars since 1982.

The order includes 55 sleepers, 38 coaches, 20 dining cars, 15 lounge cars, and 12 transition-dormitory cars. Six of the sleepers will have 10 deluxe bedrooms upstairs and the usual four economy bedrooms, one family room and one handicapped room downstairs. These sleepers are for use on Auto Train.

The order will allow adding one sleeper each to these western trains: *Empire Builder*, *Coast Starlight*, *California Zephyr*, *Southwest Chief*, and *Texas Eagle* (Houston section). The *Houston Eagle* will also get a lounge and the *Starlight* will get a peak-season second dining car.

The new Superliners will replace single level equipment on the *City of New Orleans*, *Capitol Limited* and *Auto Train*. Some of these displaced cars will allow a daily *Cardinal*.

Sleepers will come first to quickly increase first class space on western trains.

Included in the contract is an option for 39 more cars at the same price. This is the number needed to make the *Sunset Limited* daily and (See Superliners, page 3)

## "Flexibility Run Amok!"

Francis Francois, Executive Director  
American Assoc. of State Highway and Transportation Officials

related projects would qualify for highway trust funds. Amtrak president Claytor may get his "penny for Amtrak" yet. There will undoubtedly be strong opposition to Moynihan's concept from the road gang. Please write your senators and representative to let them know you support flexible funding and a level playing field where transit and rail projects receive a federal matching share equal to highways. Senate: Washington, DC 20510. House: Washington, DC 20515. A Senate vote may come by mid-June.

Moynihan is chair of the Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Water Resources, Transportation and Infrastructure.

Particularly surprising is

(including Amtrak) which alleviate traffic congestion or improve air quality (requires 25% local share).

- o H.R. 958, authorizing use of Federal-aid bridge replacement and rehabilitation funds for transit- and rail-over-highway bridges.

H.R. 1605 could be very important because of the strong transportation planning provisions of last year's Clean Air Act. Provisions for approving new highway projects are very tough. Proposed projects can be denied if they don't improve air quality. Sec. of Transportation Samuel Skinner said "the Clean Air Act will cause money to go from highways to transit." We ask that you urge support for these two bills as well.



From the  
Executive  
Director's  
Desk by  
Lloyd H. Flem

Thoughts on  
the Future  
of Rail in  
Washington:  
WashARP's  
goals of

balanced transportation, with greater future emphasis on the roles for passenger and freight rail, are increasingly shared by influential private and public sector spokespersons and, more importantly, by the general public.

WashARP has and plans to retain a friendly and supportive alliance with our state's rail industry, whether BN management, Amtrak employees, rail labor leaders, short line operators, or government rail staffers and regulators. But our prorail goals will not be compromised by our trying to be unpaid cheerleaders for the rail establishment, particularly when: 1) they disagree among themselves on key issues (example: Stampede Pass preservation); and 2) positions taken by segments of the rail industry are not in the long term interests of rail, of balanced transportation, and of the many economic, social, environmental, and resource use benefits that could result.

Congresswomen Jolene Unsoeld hosted a "Rail Futures" conference in Tumwater on May 24 for her southwest Washington district. (I was keynote speaker.) While most of those present boosted rail as a transportation mode which should be preserved and expanded, BN's presentation was designed to discourage increased development of rail by public and private entities. BN does an important and commendable job of running major trains on a shrinking number of routes, but expressed satisfaction with the overall transportation status quo.

BN will work to preserve their existing niche (they do oppose triple truck trailers)

but appear to accept public policies that have caused a steady decline in rail's total transportation market share and the social, environmental, and resource use detriments of truckification. BN's fine president Gerald Grinstein has changed past BN policies to positions balanced-transportation advocates and the general public like; we can hope he will also take a more assertive position on recapturing a larger market for rail.

UP railroad's nontraditional young boss, Mike Walsh, is intent on doing that, according to a recent *Fortune* magazine article. Walsh, conceding UP's problems were primarily management-induced, is succeeding in recapturing some business from trucks. Walsh is also impressing Drew Lewis, czar of the UP holding company, who had been willing to trash UP railroad in favor of investment in Overnight, the huge trucking company Lewis had bought, a behavior of possible value to corporate stockholders but poor policy for our country. Hopefully, Walsh's unorthodox efforts will impress shippers, rail labor, Drew Lewis, and stockholders alike. He obviously impressed *Fortune*, a magazine never accused of romantic, do-gooder, or environmentalist leanings!

WashARP has sympathy for our state's struggling short line operators. The complexity of government regulation and the absurd level of paperwork required for even small operations unnecessarily adds to the costs and problems of expanding rail's role in transportation without an equivalent benefit to the health and safety of shippers, rail workers, or the public. We cannot agree the "whole problem" of rail's relative decline is government regulation, however. As UP's Walsh says, rail man-

agement also has been to blame, and public policies that have blatantly subsidized nonrail modes for many decades (irrespective of "regulation" per se) must be addressed. Also, rail is a quasi-utility; an anarchic level of management freedom is not in the country's interest either.

On one level WashARP feels more kinship with rail labor, who nearly always really likes trains, than with white-collar rail folks. But we sincerely wish rail unions would work for balanced transportation and an increased role for rail, rather than fighting for archaic and counterproductive rules, regulations, and policies that have had the effect of giving nonrail modes further economic advantages, ultimately destroying rail jobs. I believe the development of more rail service on small, as well as larger, scales can assure more rail jobs, which, if the Brotherhoods offer the advantages workers deserve, would become union jobs.

We believe rail has a big future in our part of the country. We hope the existing rail establishment helps bring about this future.

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To DC--the Trip, the Tasks: Cross country by Amtrak in late April was great. One lazy sleeping car attendant and a broken berth were insignificant glitches compared to the overwhelmingly enjoyable and relaxing trip. Utilizing United Airlines westbound, my response to this half of the economical new Amtrak/United rail/fly program...it was quick.

Highlights in DC included productive visits with key staffers of Cong. John Miller (R-Seattle) and Al Swift (D-Bellingham). In addition, Swift gave WashARP nearly a half hour of his time as transportation ideas were shared. Swift is a great as-



set, given his chairmanship of the House subcommittee on Transportation and Hazardous Waste and his excellent positions on energy, transportation, and rail. Miller has been an environmental leader, differing from Reagan and Bush in important ways. WashARP is pleased with Swift, Miller, and much of our state's delegation for their stands on key issues.

Another highlight was being seated with Paul Weyrich, the Reagan-appointed archconservative Amtrak Board member. Weyrich, whose appointment he says was based on the Reagan Administration's misinformation that (devoted rail advocate) Weyrich would help scuttle Amtrak, has become an innovative and affirmatively disruptive force on the Amtrak Board. A Weyrich-led majority no longer rubber stamps Claytor and company. (Weyrich shares our admiration for the Amtrak president's generally fine work, however.) Weyrich's openness to NARP concerns and suggestions and willingness to "direct", with his conservative fiscally-responsible ideology, is certainly a plus for passenger rail. Republican WashARPer: urge Bush to keep Weyrich on the Amtrak board.

WashARP pushed a NARP proposal to have Amtrak include Salt Lake City rail (not bus) service on the rerouted Pioneer, with resultant preservation of Seattle-Portland day trips. I led our case with Duane Berentson's letter endorsing the change. (See adjacent story.)

DC is beautiful in May. All the normal sights were enjoyed by Jim Hamre, NARP director (and former Lacey resident) Carl Fowler, and me. Lincoln and Vietnam memorials were particularly moving. One could spend a month at the many Smithson-

## NARP Meetings: Shelby and DC

NARP Region 8 met in Shelby, MT on April 27. There were 40 people in attendance, many arriving on the *Empire Builder* from Oregon and Washington.

Patricia Saindon, of the state Dept. of Commerce told of Montana's newly created Dept. of Transportation. She is happy her rail and transit division will be separate from the highway division.

W. M. "Peach" Smith, Amtrak District Supervisor, announced the new Superliner order. She also discussed the status of stations from Seattle to Wolf Point that are her responsibility. Many of the smaller stations are being renovated by Amtrak with help from BN. When asked about King St. Station Smith joked, "Let's talk about something else."

OreARP president Rod Aho urged we take more aggressive stands to defend our interests before rail and government officials. He supports Lloyd Flem's "praise and push" but sometimes it is necessary to "protest with passion." Said Aho, "Rail passenger associations should temper their actions with patience, diplomacy, and fairness."

WashARP's Lloyd Flem talked of the clout of the Northwest's congressional delegation. Also, Flem noted we can "cooperate but take independent stands as well."

ian museums. Word of advice: leave your car elsewhere. DC's superb, clean, safe, efficient Metro subway is the civilized mode of DC travel. Given excellent Amtrak service, a growing commuter rail network, and Metro, we of our cool, green Washington can see the potential of rail already realized in the other Washington.

After the Shelby meeting, NARP Region 8 directors Barry Green (MT), Art Poole (OR), Jim Hamre (WA) and Lloyd Flem (WA, subbing for Hans Mueller) proceeded east to DC by train. They attended the May 2-4 NARP Board of Directors meeting.

The *Pioneer* is a perennial topic of discussion and this meeting was no exception. The NARP Board adopted a resolution supporting continued direct *Pioneer* service to Salt Lake City. By doing this #25 can run about 2½ hours later west of Ogden, serving Boise at 5:30 a.m. instead of 3:00 a.m. The northbound Portland departure would be about 4:45 p.m., two hours after the *Starlight*, instead of a half hour before it. Eastbound, the train's Denver standing time (waiting for the *Zephyr*) would be cut from 3:40 hours to just over an hour. Amtrak told NARP that after a summer of experience it will look at scheduling adjustments. We will hold their feet to the fire.

Remember, the first *Pioneer* out of Seattle on the new schedule is June 16. Barry Green, Art Poole, Hans Mueller and Jim Hamre will ride the Ogden-Denver inaugural train on June 13-14.

The Directors also adopted a NARP agenda of 5 items for the staff to pursue in the next six months. Their status will be discussed at the Fall meeting (more next issue).

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Superliners, from page 1  
reestablish Oklahoma service.

The new Superliners will have "full retention waste disposal systems that comply with federal law requiring all trains to have such systems by [Nov. 16] 1996."

The NARP board of directors is compiling a list of recommended improvements to the Superliners that the NARP staff will be discussing with Amtrak management.



## WashARP News

The monthly meeting for July is the 13th at 12:15 p.m. It is at Andy's Diner, Seattle. The August meeting is in Edmonds but the location is not yet set.

## Swift sets Amtrak field hearing

Cong. Al Swift (D-Bellingham) will hold a field hearing on Northwest Amtrak service on July 1. It will be at 8:00 a.m. in the Seattle Federal Building. WashARP's Lloyd Flem and Gary Molyneux are providing Swift's office input for the hearing.

Amtrak may be represented by President Graham Claytor. Also expected to testify are a BN representative (possibly President Gerald Grinstein), state DOT Secretary Duane Berentson, and representatives of the Legislature and the Ports of Seattle and Bellingham.

While the hearing is open to the public, no public testimony will be taken. All members of WashARP are welcome to attend. Call Lloyd Flem (943-8333, Olympia) late in June to confirm the time and location.

## Northwest Rail Briefs

The Legislature adjourned in April without adopting spending budgets for the 1991-1993 biennium. They will reconvene in mid-June. The House's transportation proposal included \$10 mill. for Amtrak! The Senate version, none. We hear that Washington state Amtrak enhancements will be funded at some level but the amount is cloaked in secrecy....Port-

land's MAX light rail line has served as a catalyst for more pedestrian-oriented development in the downtown. MAX has also spurred many housing and office developments along the line to Gresham. In downtown Gresham, a \$122 mill. shopping mall is proposed to straddle the rail line. Daily ridership is now 24,000. On May 30 and 31, Puget Sound officials were looking over MAX and the development it has spurred.



Executive Director Lloyd Flem, in front of the U.S. Capitol, contemplating our Congressional staff visits.

Photo by Jim Hamre

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