



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

SEP 22 2009

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, 2009 (Pub. L. 111-8) requires the Federal Railroad Administrator to “submit a quarterly report on April 1, 2009, 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 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph C. Szabo".

Joseph C. Szabo
Administrator

Enclosures

October 1, 2009

**October 2009 Report on Amtrak On-Time Performance
Submitted by the Federal Railroad Administrator
Under Section 154 of Pub. L. 111-8**

This report includes two sections: (1) an update on recent Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) efforts to catalyze improvements in Amtrak's on-time performance (OTP); and (2) in keeping with the FRA's July 1, 2009 OTP report, an update on Amtrak OTP results and performance against FRA-established goals.

(1) Recent OTP Improvement Actions

Southeast Corridor: Amtrak continues to benefit from reductions in slow orders and freight train interference as a result of the Southeast (I-95) Corridor Performance Improvement Plan, which the FRA required of Amtrak management as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 Grant Agreement between the FRA and Amtrak. For example, in August 2009, slow order delays impacting Amtrak trains on the Southeast Corridor (SEC) decreased by 11 minutes compared to the previous year lowering the average slow order delays to 18 minutes per trip. In the same month, freight train interference delays decreased by 8 minutes compared to the previous year, which also lowered average freight train interference delays to 18 minutes per trip.

These delay reductions coincide with an increase in on-time arrivals among SEC trains through August 2009; however, the overall OTP levels of the routes traversing this corridor have varied. The *Auto Train* had the highest endpoint OTP among Amtrak's long-distance trains (88.1 percent) through August 2009 and achieved an on-time performance of 100 percent in the month of August. Meetings between Amtrak and CSX have occurred to discuss removing some of the additional hour that was added to the *Auto Train's* Spring - Summer 2008 published timetable while operational and infrastructure improvements were implemented on the corridor. The *Palmetto*, *Carolinian*, and *Silver Star* have experienced notable year-over-year improvements to their endpoint OTP through August 2009 (increases of 16, 20, and 23 percentage points respectively). Overall, however, these three routes are in Amtrak's bottom half for on-time arrivals.

California Zephyr: The Union Pacific (UP) Railroad and Amtrak continue to implement their 2007 agreement to reduce delays on UP's portion of the *California Zephyr*, which extends from Denver, Colorado to Emeryville, California. As part of the agreement, Amtrak temporarily added time to the *Zephyr's* schedule to account for the UP's track improvement work. As track work has been completed, Amtrak has gradually removed the added time from the schedule. The final hour of added time is scheduled to be removed in Amtrak's next published timetable (October 2009).

Other Recent OTP Developments: Amtrak and UP recently made significant progress on the performance improvement plan for the UP's portion of the Chicago – St. Louis corridor. The focus on the corridor has contributed to recent OTP improvements for Amtrak trains. For example, the endpoint OTP for the Chicago – St. Louis *Lincoln Service* is 72.3 percent through August, which year-over-year, is a 30 percentage point improvement.

Amtrak met with the major freight host railroads during the second week of September for a performance improvement plan progress review meeting. While the plans continue to move forward, implementation of identified action items across Amtrak's network is expected to accelerate upon completion of the Section 207 Metrics and Standards within the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. Amtrak and FRA developed and published preliminary metrics and standards for Amtrak's performance, which were released for public comment. Amtrak and FRA have reviewed the submitted comments and are currently in the process of finalizing these performance measures.

(2) Goals and Route Performance

Attachment A contains updated OTP statistics for all Amtrak routes for the fiscal year-to-date through August 2009. As the attachment illustrates, three-fourths of the routes (30) have had improvements in OTP (in terms of both improved percent on time and no decrease in effective speed) through August 2009. Of those routes experiencing OTP improvement, a total of 19 (nine corridor-type and ten long-distance trains) are meeting or are surpassing their FRA-defined OTP target for FY 2009.

For FY 2009, the on-time performance across the entire Amtrak system through August was 80 percent, an increase of 9.2 percentage points over the previous year. Amtrak's short distance routes outside of the Northeast Corridor (i.e. "Other Corridor Services") have experienced a 10 percentage-point increase year-over-year (for an average endpoint OTP of 80.2 percent) while the long-distance trains have experienced a 20 percentage-point increase during the same period (for an average endpoint OTP of 74.3 percent). Further highlighting these fiscal year-to-date on-time improvements, all but one of Amtrak's routes have experienced increases in endpoint OTP through August and almost two-thirds have had endpoint OTP increases of ten percentage points or greater.

In summary, while much progress is needed to bring Amtrak's OTP to satisfactory levels, FY 2009 has seen gathering momentum that can only be helped by further cooperation between Amtrak and the freight railroads, and the prospect of noteworthy State-sponsored investments under FRA's ongoing High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program.

Attachment A
Amtrak On-Time Performance: FY 2009
Year-to-Date Totals through August

	✓ Indicates both tests were met for OTP Progress	Test 1: Higher Percent On Time YTD - August 2009 vs. YTD - August 2008				Test 2: Constant or Better Effective Speed
		FY09 % On Time	% Change from FY08	Proposed Target for FY09	% Variance from FY09 Target	Change in MPH from October 2007 Baseline
<i>Northeast Corridor Service (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 95%)</i>						
Acela		87.0%	3.2%	90.7%	(3.7%)	(1.1)
Regional Service		79.5%	4.0%	84.8%	(5.3%)	(1.3)
<i>Other Corridor Services (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 90%. Minimum target proposed for FY 2009: 75%)</i>						
Adirondack	✓	56.7%	13.6%	75.0%	(18.3%)	2.0
Blue Water	✓	50.7%	22.0%	75.0%	(24.3%)	1.4
Capitols	✓	92.2%	6.9%	80.8%	11.4%	1.5
Carolinian	✓	57.3%	19.6%	75.0%	(17.7%)	2.0
Cascades	✓	71.1%	6.3%	75.0%	(3.9%)	0.6
Downeaster		73.7%	3.8%	82.8%	(9.1%)	(0.6)
Empire Service		82.4%	10.1%	79.0%	3.4%	(1.6)
Ethan Allen Express		53.4%	18.8%	75.0%	(21.6%)	(2.1)
Heartland Flyer	✓	82.9%	31.5%	75.0%	7.9%	4.8
Hiawatha		87.4%	0.3%	89.5%	(2.1%)	(0.7)
Hoosier State	✓	51.7%	9.9%	75.0%	(23.3%)	0.8
Illini		48.6%	(0.8%)	77.4%	(28.8%)	(1.7)
Illinois Zephyr	✓	87.7%	10.2%	75.1%	12.5%	0.9
Keystone	✓	89.7%	1.7%	87.2%	2.5%	0.3
Lincoln Service	✓	72.3%	30.4%	75.0%	(2.7%)	1.8
Maple Leaf	✓	59.6%	15.8%	75.0%	(15.4%)	1.2
Missouri Services	✓	71.8%	52.6%	75.0%	(3.2%)	4.9
Pacific Surfliner	✓	83.1%	7.2%	80.9%	2.2%	0.3
Pennsylvanian	✓	96.1%	9.3%	78.9%	17.2%	1.2
Pere Marquette	✓	35.8%	12.1%	75.0%	(39.2%)	0.5
Piedmont		75.5%	4.3%	80.6%	(5.1%)	(0.9)
San Joaquins	✓	90.0%	7.6%	76.8%	13.2%	2.0
Vermonteer	✓	88.4%	52.5%	75.0%	13.4%	0.4
Wolverines	✓	43.0%	15.6%	75.0%	(32.0%)	0.6
<i>Long Distance Trains (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 85%. Minimum target proposed for FY 2009: 66%)</i>						
Auto Train	✓	88.1%	7.4%	71.3%	16.8%	1.5
California Zephyr	✓	58.2%	25.9%	66.3%	(8.1%)	4.1
Capitol Limited	✓	69.7%	35.1%	66.3%	3.5%	3.3
Cardinal		45.6%	13.0%	66.3%	(20.7%)	(0.4)
City of New Orleans		82.6%	18.7%	85.0%	(2.4%)	(0.2)
Coast Starlight	✓	81.5%	18.5%	66.3%	15.3%	1.8
Crescent	✓	84.5%	18.0%	66.3%	18.3%	1.0
Empire Builder		74.5%	7.1%	78.0%	(3.5%)	(0.3)
Lake Shore Limited	✓	74.7%	16.5%	66.3%	8.5%	3.6
Palmetto	✓	66.9%	16.3%	66.3%	0.7%	3.7
Silver Meteor	✓	71.3%	6.3%	66.3%	5.1%	1.6
Silver Star	✓	66.0%	23.2%	66.3%	(0.2%)	1.4
Southwest Chief	✓	84.8%	19.8%	70.1%	14.7%	0.5
Sunset Limited	✓	78.4%	53.4%	66.3%	12.2%	2.8
Texas Eagle	✓	73.3%	55.7%	66.3%	7.1%	1.6