



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

JUL - 1 2009

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

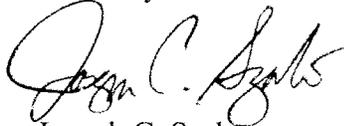
Dear Mr. Chairman:

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,



Joseph C. Szabo

Enclosures

July 1, 2009

**July 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 April 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, through May 2009, slow orders, which are currently the largest source of delay on this corridor, were down 29 percent. Likewise, freight train interference delays on the Southeast Corridor have decreased by 40 percent year-over-year through May.

These delay reductions coincide with an increase in on-time arrivals among Southeast Corridor trains through May 2009; however, the overall OTP levels of the routes traversing this corridor have varied. Through May 2009 the *Auto Train's* endpoint OTP was 86.5 percent, the highest among Amtrak's long distance trains, while the *Palmetto*, *Silver Star*, and *Silver Meteor* had on-time performances that ranked among the middle of the long distance trains. The *Carolinian* had the lowest endpoint OTP among Southeast Corridor trains through May 2009 (63.2 percent) and, in terms of OTP, fell among the lowest third of short-distance trains outside the Northeast Corridor.

California Zephyr: The Union Pacific Railroad (UP) 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, as demonstrated in the Spring - Summer 2009 published timetable, which removed an hour from the *Zephyr's* schedule.

While UP continues to make progress in reducing delays on the *Zephyr's* route, Amtrak and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway are also implementing a Performance Improvement Plan (initiated at the suggestion of FRA) for the BNSF's portion of the route between Chicago, Illinois and Denver, Colorado. On the BNSF segment of the route, freight train interference was down 21 percent and slow orders were down 14 percent through May 2009. Amtrak attributes the *Zephyr's* reduction in freight train interference mainly to changes in management practices at both BNSF and UP. Such improvements, combined with reduced slow orders, have improved the reliability of freight and passenger trains along the route.

Other Recent OTP Developments: Collaborative efforts between Amtrak and host freight railroads, spurred in part by the increased Federal interest in Amtrak's OTP, has fostered notable operational successes on certain host rail lines. Through May 2009, freight train interference delays on the Norfolk Southern (NS) and UP systems were down 68 and 65 percent respectively year-over-year. The UP has also been successful over this period at reducing slow order delays across its network by 44 percent. As a result, a number of Amtrak routes on these host railroads have had notable year-over-year improvements in on-time performance. The *Pennsylvanian* (which operates over NS trackage) and the *Capitols* (which operate over UP trackage) have the best endpoint OTP (96.5 and 92.1 percent respectively through May 2009) in the Amtrak system, while the *Crescent* (which operates over NS) has been among the top on-time performers among the long distance trains (with an endpoint OTP of 86.2 percent for the fiscal year-to-date). The *Sunset Limited* and *Texas Eagle* (which traverse UP trackage and historically have been among Amtrak's least on-time trains) have had year-over-year OTP increases of 52 and 44 percentage points respectively through May 2009.

(2) Goals and Route Performance

Attachment A contains updated OTP statistics for all Amtrak routes for the fiscal year-to-date through May 2009. As the attachment illustrates, almost 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 May 2009. Of those routes experiencing OTP improvement, a total of 20 (eight corridor-type and twelve 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 May was 79.9 percent, an increase of 7.3 percentage points over the previous year. Amtrak's short distance routes outside of the Northeast Corridor (i.e. "Other Corridor Services") have experienced almost an eight percentage-point increase year-over-year (for an average endpoint OTP of 80.1 percent) while the long-distance trains have experienced over a 16 percentage-point increase during the same period (for an average endpoint OTP of 74.5 percent). Further highlighting these fiscal year-to-date OTP improvements, over half of Amtrak's routes have had endpoint OTP increases of ten percentage points or greater while only two Amtrak routes have experienced declines in endpoint OTP through May 2009.

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

	✓ Indicates both tests were met for OTP Progress	Test 1: Higher Percent On Time YTD - May 2009 vs. YTD - May 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%	2.5%	90.7%	(3.7%)	(1.1)
Regional Service		79.1%	1.8%	84.8%	(5.7%)	(1.4)
<i>Other Corridor Services (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 90%. Minimum target proposed for FY 2009: 75%)</i>						
Adirondack	✓	63.0%	15.4%	75.0%	(12.0%)	2.2
Blue Water	✓	49.9%	19.6%	75.0%	(25.1%)	1.4
Capitol	✓	92.1%	5.4%	80.8%	11.3%	1.5
Carolinian	✓	63.2%	18.4%	75.0%	(11.8%)	2.3
Cascades	✓	70.7%	4.8%	75.0%	(4.3%)	0.4
Downeaster		71.4%	(2.7%)	82.8%	(11.4%)	(0.9)
Empire Service		83.8%	10.1%	79.0%	4.8%	(1.6)
Ethan Allen Express		57.3%	24.7%	75.0%	(17.7%)	(2.0)
Heartland Flyer	✓	80.3%	28.6%	75.0%	5.3%	4.7
Hiawatha		86.8%	0.5%	89.5%	(2.7%)	(0.9)
Hoosier State	✓	54.4%	12.1%	75.0%	(20.6%)	0.8
Illini		88.4%	36.6%	77.4%	11.0%	(1.0)
Illinois Zephyr	✓	85.4%	6.0%	75.1%	10.3%	0.6
Keystone	✓	88.4%	0.6%	87.2%	1.1%	0.2
Lincoln Service	✓	69.7%	22.2%	75.0%	(5.3%)	1.5
Maple Leaf	✓	61.9%	16.0%	75.0%	(13.1%)	1.3
Missouri Services	✓	64.4%	46.2%	75.0%	(10.6%)	4.1
Pacific Surfliner	✓	83.4%	5.8%	80.9%	2.5%	0.3
Pennsylvanian	✓	96.5%	6.7%	78.9%	17.6%	1.2
Pere Marquette	✓	35.9%	9.9%	75.0%	(39.1%)	0.4
Piedmont		74.2%	(4.0%)	80.6%	(6.4%)	(1.1)
San Joaquins	✓	89.2%	4.0%	76.8%	12.4%	1.9
Vermont	✓	87.7%	54.5%	75.0%	12.7%	0.3
Wolverines	✓	45.5%	15.8%	75.0%	(29.5%)	0.7
<i>Long Distance Trains (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 85%. Minimum target proposed for FY 2009: 66%)</i>						
Auto Train	✓	86.5%	5.9%	71.3%	15.2%	1.4
California Zephyr	✓	59.1%	21.8%	66.3%	(7.2%)	4.0
Capitol Limited	✓	67.7%	27.4%	66.3%	1.4%	3.3
Cardinal		49.3%	11.0%	66.3%	(17.0%)	(0.3)
City of New Orleans		83.7%	9.9%	85.0%	(1.3%)	(0.1)
Coast Starlight	✓	79.4%	10.0%	66.3%	13.1%	1.7
Crescent	✓	86.2%	14.1%	66.3%	20.0%	1.1
Empire Builder		74.0%	4.1%	78.0%	(4.1%)	(0.5)
Lake Shore Limited	✓	75.5%	17.5%	66.3%	9.2%	3.5
Palmetto	✓	70.9%	13.7%	66.3%	4.7%	4.0
Silver Meteor	✓	74.6%	6.7%	66.3%	8.4%	1.7
Silver Star	✓	66.9%	21.8%	66.3%	0.6%	1.5
Southwest Chief	✓	86.4%	12.3%	70.1%	16.3%	0.6
Sunset Limited	✓	74.6%	52.0%	66.3%	8.4%	2.9
Texas Eagle	✓	68.1%	44.3%	66.3%	1.9%	1.5