

**TESTIMONY OF
MARTIN CONWAY
DEPUTY POLICE CHIEF**

**AMTRAK
60 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20002**

**BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY'S
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
RESPONSE, AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**FIELD HEARING ON
"PROTECTING OUR PASSENGERS: PERSPECTIVES ON
SECURING SURFACE TRANSPORTATION IN NEW JERSEY
AND NEW YORK."**

TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2016

10:00 A.M.

**HEPBURN HALL, ROOM 202, NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY
2039 KENNEDY BOULEVARD, JERSEY CITY, NJ 07305**

Good morning Chairman Daniel Donovan, Ranking Member Donald Payne, Jr., and members of the Committee. Thank you very much for the invitation to speak today. Amtrak takes its responsibility to protect its riders seriously, and on behalf of Mr. Boardman, and the men and women of the Amtrak Police Department (APD), I'm Martin Conway, Deputy of Chief of Police for Amtrak and it's an honor to appear before you today on behalf of the men and women of Amtrak to discuss our region's coordinated preparations to secure vital transportation systems. I've been with Amtrak for 5 years and prior to that, I was with the NYPD for 26 years. While with NYPD, I served as Commanding Officer of several commands within the bureaus, including the Transit Bureau; my last assignment was a five year stint as an inspector in the Counterterrorism Division, where I was responsible for coordinating all counterterrorism measures within the city subway system.

Amtrak is America's Railroad, serving more than 500 communities in 46 states, carrying over 30 million travelers a year. APD was created to protect employees, passengers, stations, rolling stock and critical infrastructure. Uniformed officers are the most visible presence, but a Special Operations capability performs station surges and counter surveillance, conducts random passenger bag screening, patrols rights-of-way and protects dignitaries. Our K-9 program which consists of both conventional and vapor wake detection dogs averages 1,000 train rides a month. We coordinate with numerous other local, state, and Federal agencies, and officers from Amtrak's Intelligence Unit are assigned to the FBI National Joint Terrorism Task Force at the National Counter-Terrorism Center, as well as regional Joint Terrorism Task forces and the police and security organizations for connecting transit modes.

A high level of cooperation and coordination is particularly important, because more than half of all Amtrak stations feature some form of connecting transportation service, and major stations like Newark Penn or New York Penn Station are multi-modal, hosting busses, subways and commuter rail. Passenger rail security differs fundamentally from aviation security. The nodal aspect of our stations, combined with offices, food courts and retail establishments, makes a major urban station into a high traffic location. Daily commuting cycles require a fundamentally different security solution than airports, because urban terrain is different, and rail journeys are an organic part of our travelers' daily schedule. The very high degree of connectivity between our modes is an advantage for travelers, but a vulnerability from the security point of view, and it is therefore of critical importance that we work closely with our modal connections and their police forces, to ensure that our information-sharing and quick reaction capabilities are sufficient to keep us ahead of any threat.

While small stations (both rural and outlying commuter stops) are frequently unstaffed, they provide access and connectivity to major cities, and we must also work closely with local police to ensure the same type of cooperation. This is a particularly important function here in the Northeast, where five of Amtrak's ten busiest stations are located; the NEC carries more than 220 million riders a year. Amtrak serves more than 520 stations in 46 states, about a hundred more than the total count of airports that host scheduled domestic air service in the 48 contiguous states. Many railroad stations are a part of the urban fabric of city centers, with a tremendous volume of traffic. New York Penn Station, for example, hosts more rail travelers annually than the La Guardia, JFK, and Newark Airports together, a combination of Amtrak and commuter rail passengers – and that total doesn't include all of the subway and bus riders who pass through the station without taking a train.

To ensure the necessary level of coordination and information sharing, Amtrak has partnered with NYPD and the TSA to form “Operation RAILS SAFE,” a regional alliance that includes Federal, state, local, railroad and transit police organizations. RAILS SAFE functions at several levels, the most visible being tactical deployments at stations and along the right of way to exercise our incident response and counterterrorism capabilities, and we also conduct coordinated efforts such as heightened station patrols, increased security presence on trains, K9 explosive sweeps, random bag inspections and countersurveillance in an effort to reassure the public, display our capabilities, and make it more difficult for a would-be attacker to what the environment will look like at any particular time or place. RAILS SAFE has significantly improved cooperation among participating agencies, and that relationship has in turn provided the foundation for training opportunities that have so far been extended to 56 separate agencies.

Terrorist tactics continue to evolve, and we must keep pace. U.S.-based extremists will continue to pose the most frequent threat to the U.S. Homeland. As the tragic attacks in Boston, Garland, Texas, and in New York have shown over the last several years, the new terrorist threats are already here. Either alone or in small groups, with the ability to mask the extent of their radicalization, these individuals represent the most lethal of threats. U.S.-based jihadist terror cases increased more in 2015 than in any full year since 2001. From “lone wolf” attackers to ISIL radicals, we see a greater likelihood of attack than we have in years. The internet and cyberspace have become the new recruiting ground and the new battle-space. Aided by the internet and social media, ISIL has featured plans to kill U.S. soldiers or law enforcement personnel and the recent attacks in France and against tourists in Tunisia demonstrate the threat is increasing.

Screening every passenger prior to boarding a train, as the airports do would require resources and technology that rail properties don’t possess and probably couldn’t afford. We do however, employ a variety of tactics to surveil key infrastructure and stations, while retaining robust capability to surge our resources and leverage our partnerships in unpredictable ways to complicate the task for a would-be attacker. We coordinate with other law enforcement agencies and the intelligence community to respond to threats and adapt tactics in anticipation of potential new threats. We have also trained Amtrak’s employees and passengers to spot and report suspicious behaviors via phone or text. The ability to leverage our skilled workforce contributes significantly to our safety and security.

Our chief often says...“aviation gets billions and rail gets millions” and the *New York Times*, recently noted that TSA’s \$7.55 billion dollar annual budget translates into a cost of about \$10 per passenger-trip; that’s almost twice Amtrak’s total annual budget last year. Over the years Amtrak has received varied levels of funding from Congress. Prior to 2012 Amtrak received over \$20 million from the Intercity Passenger Rail grant program but in the past several cycles that has been appropriated at \$10 million level. Amtrak security would benefit from a restoration of these funds and a discussion on further future investment and eligibility for other programs.

I look forward to answering any question you might have regarding rail transportation security.