Freight and Passenger Rail in America's Transportation System

Testimony before the Railroads and Pipelines Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Joseph H. Boardman
President & CEO
In the beginning

- Prior to 1970
- Rail Passenger Service Act
- Amtrak's formation
- Industry implications

First day of Amtrak – May 1, 1971
System basics

- 22,000 mile operation (mostly on other railroads)
- More than 300 daily trains
- More than 500 stations in 46 states
- Financial and operating indices moving in the right directions:
  - Covers 88% of operating costs
  - 9 ridership records in 10 years
  - Operating need halved since 2004
  - Corporate debt halved since 2002

Federal capital investment underpins operating cost recovery improvements
The long distance trains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Name</th>
<th>% of rural residents served 2006</th>
<th>% of rural residents served 2010</th>
<th>Change (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>-34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>-28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>71.8%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>-26.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
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<td>50.2%</td>
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<td>Louisiana</td>
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<td>72.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
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<td>62.8%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>69.6%</td>
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<td>Nevada</td>
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<td>66.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
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<td>61.0%</td>
<td>-27.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
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<td>72.9%</td>
<td>-23.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
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<td>35.2%</td>
<td>-30.1%</td>
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<td>Virginia</td>
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<td>68.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>-38.9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- A public service:
  - 43% of passenger-miles, but only 11% of frequencies
  - 15% of ridership, but 25% of ticket revenues
  - 42% of identified passengers with disabilities who use Amtrak
  - Only Amtrak service at half our stations and in half the states we serve

- Serve about 40% of America's rural population
- More than half of adult passengers are age 55 or older
- In many places, only remaining scheduled intercity transportation (bus services serve 11% fewer Americans in 2011 than 2005)
Some Amtrak myths

The Myth

- “the train [Acela] rarely gets above 100 mph”
- “the average intercity highway trip uses less energy per passenger mile than the average Amtrak trip”
- “people who want trains dislike the personal autonomy that the auto confers”
- “private industry will do it better”

The Reality

- 65% of the track between DC and NYC is rated for 125-135mph and we are in the process of raising top speeds to 160mph
- The average New Yorker wastes a full work week (44hrs) of his/her life in traffic every year. What’s authoritarian about wanting an alternative to that?
- Amtrak was formed because private companies couldn’t make it work
Existence at the intersection

Congress(es)

Administration(s)

This is the world Amtrak exists — guidance comes from multiple sources and policies and requirements often outlive their authors and the circumstances that produced them.

US DOT
Amtrak's capital needs are significant

- Infrastructure investment lagging
- Fleet age is a major challenge
  - Today the fleet is the oldest we’ve ever had
  - Fleet plan created to avoid future ‘lumps’ and seed the industry
  - Procurements have begun – but funding needed to sustain progress
- Infrastructure investment needed to accommodate traffic in coming years
  - Gateway
  - NextGen HSR equipment
- Investment needs affect the whole system

Sustained capital funding will be the key to future improvement