

TTD NEWS RELEASE

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Privatization Will Doom National Amtrak Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Edward Wytkind, President of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), offers the following statement on the proposal to privatize Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and put the entire system up for bid:*

"The purpose of running a national passenger rail system isn't to enrich Wall Street and wealthy investors by handing them one of the nation's most prized and complex surface transportation corridors. Unfortunately, the Mica-Shuster proposal to privatize Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC) does exactly this. And expansion of this risky policy experiment to services beyond the NEC will bankrupt passenger rail service for millions of Americans.

"We support boosting the role of the private sector in our rail transportation system but we are opposed to privatizing and breaking up Amtrak. Privatization is hardly a new idea. It has been discredited when attempted in other parts of the world, most notably in Great Britain where fares went up, service and safety deteriorated, and passengers and employees died. If you strip Amtrak of its most successful and economically viable network, the NEC, you doom the wildly successful Acela high-speed service and the rest of the system will wither from predictable under-investment, neglect and abandonment.

"The Mica-Shuster proposal is a solution in search of a problem.

"Amtrak is doing better today than at any time in its history. NEC service is booming, demand for more train travel across America is off the charts and Amtrak management has a strategic plan to modernize its system and infrastructure and bring 220 M.P.H. service to the NEC. The only thing missing is the will in Congress to fund this long-term vision for a region whose economic output is 20 percent of GDP using just 2 percent of America's land.

"We will mobilize in support of a proposal that embraces Amtrak as the centerpiece of high speed rail on the NEC and across America and builds partnerships with the private sector to boost job creation and investment."

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The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, represents 32 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit www.ttd.org.

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