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Railroad Passengers Ask for Support of Long-Distance Trains

The National Association of Railroad Passengers today appealed directly to House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Bill Shuster (R-PA) for increased support of Amtrak's long-distance trains.

In a letter to Shuster, NARP urged the congressman to look for a "fresh approach" that would encourage expanded rather than reduced capacity on Amtrak's "popular, heavily used [long-distance] trains." The letter noted that travelers have faced reductions in air service, particularly in smaller markets. As well, the letter cited the nation's growing senior population, the "increasing number of young people [who] don't own automobiles," and "millions who find flying to be too expensive, too inconvenient or simply too unpleasant."

The NARP letter was prompted by Chairman Shuster's comments last week in which he suggested it was time to "take a hard look at" the mandate that Amtrak provide nationwide passenger rail service.

"We are concerned that the chairman's remarks mean that the very existence of the long-distance trains could be in jeopardy," said Ross Capon, NARP's president and CEO.

"Some 173 million Americans – more than half of our total population – live within 25 miles of an Amtrak station and thus have the choice to travel by train. Moreover, in 23 of the lower 48 states, long-distance trains are the only intercity passenger trains," Capon said. "We should be lengthening trains, adding frequencies and adding routes, not opening the door to a possible reduction in rail service."

About the National Association of Railroad Passengers

NARP is the only national organization speaking for the users of passenger trains and rail transit. We have worked since 1967 to expand the quality and quantity of passenger rail in the U.S. Our mission is to work towards a modern, customer-focused national passenger train network that provides a travel choice Americans want. Our work is supported by over 22,000 individual members.

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