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as mailed Mar. 16)

RETURN REQUESTED

AMTRAK STRIKES GOLD

sive ridership increases on the Los Angeles-San Diego the emergence of an articulate state consumer group, or Rail California, bode well for the future of California's nger service.

y 16, 1976, Amtrak introduced new Amfleet coaches on On September 1, Caltrans (California DOT) and Amtrak rces under Section 403(b) of the Amtrak law (state or ncy paying one-half of the costs) to increase the γ of LA-San Diego service from three to four daily ps. The results of these improvements are clearly 1 the ridership totals:

deservation and the loss	1975	1976	% Change	(
	44,535	46,953	5	(
	51,167	55,731	9	(
er	29,710	37,620	27	
	21,067	40,990	95	
er	23,513	45,509	94	
r	23,030	41,509	80	
	1976	1977		
	23,989	41,401	73	
	25,310	45,642	80	
A STATISTICS AND				

Commuter Mess

ortheast rail reorganization has been a disaster for r rail. For most commuter rail services acquired by om the bankrupt predecessor railroads, prospects are geous subsidy levels or discontinuance. The one is where Conrail was "kicked out" after another ffered to do the job for less money.

al legislation is required at the Federal level (a.) to or arbitration of disputes over how much a transit must pay for commuter rail operations, so that Conrail obvious interest in an inflated subsidy — does not have say as at present; (b.) to resolve the matter of cation of Conrail against the costs of catastrophic and (c.) to change the formula by which the Urban ansportation Administration (UMTA) distributes subsidies ("Section 5 money").

nciple drafters of the reorganization laws focused their primarily on the freight problem. After all, a regional of freight service was the most dramatic possibility eded forestalling, and there were already laws and ograms for commuter rail. Furthermore, thanks largely On April 24, a fifth train will be inaugurated, also jointly funded by Amtrak and the state. Caltrans plans to spend \$1.6 million on track improvements along the route, cutting the running time by 18 minutes, with work completion expected this summer.

The State has also approved funding for three trains to serve the Sacramento-Oakland corridor. The first state-supported train over this route may begin operation this summer, in conjunction with a possible rescheduling of the Oakland-Bakersfield service northbound in the morning and southbound in the evening.

Ridership increases to date on the San Diego-Los Angeles route have surpassed Amtrak's most optimistic expectations. Still, Caltrans predicts that the fifth train will break the market wide open, making possible for the first time frequent enough departures to make the service truly convenient and attractive. It is disturbing to note that Amtrak's Five Year Plan forecasts only a 12.5% increase in Los Angeles-San Diego revenues fiscal 1976 to 1977! Are all those new riders a complete surprise to Amtrak's financial planners?

Ridership on the newly Amfleeted trains between Portland and Seattle and on the Vancouver, B.C.-Seattle train has also been growing. (continued on p. 2)

"The problem before us is a problem for the States of Indiana and Illinois. The State of Illinois has made its position clear but the State of Indiana has not, even though most of the people who will be affected are residents of that state. We recognize the high level of concern of many people in northwest Indiana and their attempts to get action from their elected representatives. Because we are convinced that South Shore's service should be continued if at all possible, we will order the railroad to continue the operation of service for 10 months from (April 7, 1977; e.g. through early February, 1978). . .We expect that this will be sufficient time for the State of Indiana to take steps to save the service. If this does not occur, we think it highly likely that there is no future for the South Shore's passenger operations."

—Interstate Commerce Commission, Decision on South Shore Line's petition to discontinue all passenger service Chicago-Gary-Michigan City-South Bend (Finance Docket No. 28322)

May 2 is the deadline for submitting comments on former Secy. Coleman's Final Standards, Classification, and Designation of Class I Railroads (Jan. News, p. 4) to the ICC Rail Services Planning Office, 1900 L St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. DOT has secured an extension of the deadline for issuing the "real" (Adams) Final Report until June 30. Cor-

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k Strikes Gold (cont'd. from p. 1)

March, a number of standee problems were reported on rtland-Seattle trains. Amtrak has acknowledged the problem, but cites a temporary shortage in the number able Amfleet cars. Few, if any, extra cars will be sent to during April. Severe standee problems were expected the Easter holiday. But Amtrak's National Operations Vice nt and General Manager David Watts has assured NARP they become available later this spring, more cars will be

importance of having space on hand to accommodate the Northwest. growing markets cannot be overemphasized. We are just eginning to see what a newly equipped Amtrak can do in medium-range corridor areas. Standee problems will ally stunt that growth and could begin to drive people

something which must not be allowed to happen. mtrak or the State are at a loss for what to do next on the Coast, they should look to a consumer organization, ens for Rail California." This recently organized group has red "A Program for Rational Passenger Railway opment in California." The document sets an example other state and regional rail passenger groups could v; it is available for \$1.50 from Citizens for Rail California,

Box 99782, San Diego, CA 92109. California study includes: (1) an introductory statement g forth the basic beliefs and objectives of CRC; (2) an outline eps that must be taken between now and 1980 for the lopment of a skeletal yet functional passenger train network alifornia; (3) a map which shows clearly the six service ions called for by the group, including on the map itself a description of each; (4) a detailed account of each service, ving how each will serve demands of California's major travel

PLEASE HELP US!

Members can help us by not sending in renewal payments before they are specifically notified that their renewal is due. Additional contributions are always needed and put to good use, but please mark them as such.

Starting with the next issue, some of our mailing procedures will be changed. You will help us work possible bugs out of the new system by letting us know if you do not receive the next NARP News by the end of May.

irkets; and (5) a description of how the basic network vocated in the plan might be expanded over time to become "a ropean-style dense network of trains connecting the most pulous parts of California." The six steps called for are imbered according to order of priority.

The six incremental improvements called for in the report are) a through Sacramento-Oakland-Los Angeles train, providing rernight service between the latter two points, while giving acramento an afternoon departure for Oakland/San Jose, and e Bay Area a morning departure for Sacramento; (2) operation f a total of six daily round trips between Los Angeles and San liego with improvements to save 20 minutes operating time; (3) peration of four daily trains Sacramento-Oakland-San Jose, with ack improvements to reduce operating times; (4) rerouting of he Bakersfield-Oakland train via the Niles Canyon, northbound n the morning and southbound in the evening; (5) construction of a station at the Oakland Coliseum BART station; and (6) operation of two corridor trains between Santa Barbara and Los Angeles (in addition to the long-haul trains from San Francisco).

The CRC study is helpful in several ways. It is a sober and articulate document which gives CRC both visibility and credibility. It shows clearly how the services advocated relate to existing travel patterns. It is indispensible as a lobbying tool, both for CRC and for NARP's Washington office.

Finally, the study is timely. The Governor and the State legislature have gone on record calling for developed rail antice in California — and have begun taking steps to

Back to the Basics: **Let Your Legislators** Know What You Want!

One of the most effective ways individual NARP members can help to advance the cause of rail passenger service is by writing to their Federal legislators. Your views will carry even more punch if you can get local officials and organizations — mayors, councilmen, state legislators, chambers of commerce, LWV's - to send similar messages to their U.S. Senators and Congressmen. But never underestimate the power of an individually written

letter or postcard to influence the views of its recipients. Particularly with House members, much of the correspondence they receive from constituents is related to personal problems (such as with Social Security), so letters which seek improvements for the public generally are often a welcome change. Similarly, it is effective to visit your legislators (preferably accompanied by a few others who agree with you), either in D.C. or when they are in their district offices.

Two important rules: focus on one subject in any given letter or card, and write your own letter. (Signing a petition or sending a letter printed or worded by the organizers of a campaign is less effective because such actions require less effort and probably

indicate less strongly held views.) Also, if you agreed with a recent vote cast or public statement made by the legislator to whom you are writing, begin with a word

It's probably best not to write a second letter to the same of praise. legislator before he or she has responded to your first - unless you have something which will be of unusual interest, or more than a month has passed without a reply to your earlier letter. When writing about commuter rail matters, remember that

Federal legislators' involvement is generally limited to setting Federal aid policies (such as for the "Section 5" money discusse ate in "Commuter Mess", this issue). Proposals for new services or schedule changes are usually more appropriately addressed to state officials and/or the public transit authority involved.

Letters are properly addressed and headed as follows:

The Honorable U.S. Senate Washington, D.C. 20510	U.S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515
Washington, Dron	Dear Rep:

Dear Senator ____ In some cases, because of committee assignments, you may

wish to write to a legislator from another district or state. Always send a copy to your own House member or Senators. When you are writing to a committee or subcommittee chairman, indicate this in the address (i.e., The Honorable Warren Magnuson, Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. . .).

Money must both be authorized and then appropriated before it can be spent. The authorizing committee has primary expertise in the subject matter, and the appropriations committee in the overall budgetary situation, although the appropriations subcommittees also are very knowledgeable about the specific subjects with which they deal.

Initial appropriations are often for lower amounts than have been authorized, but supplemental appropriations bills can make up the difference later. (Supplemental authorizations are somewhat rarer.)

Each authorization and appropriation measure is first considered by the appropriate subcommittee; the bill is then written and the appropriate full committee edits it ("marks it up" before it is sent to the floor. The draft written by true subcommittee can be changed by the full committee, and amendments on the floor are common, though usually dealing

with less crucial aspects of the legislation. Since the House and Senate rarely approve identical bills, it is



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ecessary to appoint a Joint Conference Committee to 1 resolve differences, after which the Conference Report agreed to by both houses and sent to the President for n.

nust also be made of the new Congressional budget Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams played a key ne development of this process, and served as the first 1 of the House Budget Committee during 1975-76. The vas designed to force Congress to take an overall look at get, and in so doing to regain some power from the e branch.

/ 15, both houses of Congress must approve a "tentative" spending ceiling and revenue floor) for the next fiscal September 15, both houses must approve a final budget. not be exceeded except by special act of Congress. early to tell how much effect the process will have — for on cutting down on supplemental money bills. But it

seems to be taken with increasing seriousness as general concern about government spending grows.

If your legislators are budget committee members and have no other committee assignments relevant to your concern, urge them to see that budget resolutions make proper allowances for Amtrak (or whatever item is of interest to you).

Within each committee, legislators are listed here in order of seniority within their parties. C = committee chairman; other Democrats follow in order of seniority; R = ranking Republican; other Republicans follow in order of seniority. ** = chairman or ranking Republican of subcommittee indicated; * = other members of subcommittee shown.

The only new chairman directly related to Amtrak matters is Senator Russell B. Long, who replaces Sen. Hartke as chairman of the Senate authorizing subcommittee. Senator Long is also chairman of the Finance Committee, and therefore one of the Senate's most influential members.

THORIZING COMMITTEES	MASS TRANSIT (including Commut-	HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE	Walter D. Huddleston, KY
	er Rail) AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES	(Subcomm. on Transportation	Quentin N. Burdick, ND
m. on Interstate and		all modes)	Patrick J. Leahy, VT
Commerce (Subcomm. on	House Comm. on Public Works and	A REAL PROPERTY AND A REAL PROPERTY AND A	James R. Sasser, TN
tation and Commerce)	Transportation (Subcomm. on	C-George H. Mahon, TX	Dennis DeConcini, AZ
O Observer LH	Surface Transportation)	Jamie L Whitten, MS	
O. Staggers, W		Edward P. Boland, MA	R-Milton R. Young, ND
Moss, CA	C-Harold T. Johnson, CA	William H. Natcher, KY	**Clifford P. Case, NJ
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Rogers, FL	**James J. Howard, NJ	"Tom Steed, OK	Mark O. Hatfield, OR
Van Deerlin, CA	"Glenn M. Anderson, CA	George E. Shipley, IL	Ted Stevens, AK
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. Satterfield, III, VA	*Mike McCormack, WA	"Neal Smith, IA	Henry Bellmon, OK
hardt, TX	"John Breaux, LA	Robert N. Giaimo, CT	*Lowell P. Weicker, Jr., CT
son Preyer, NC	Bo Ginn, GA	"Joseph P. Addabbo, NY	
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· Metcalfe, IL	*Norman Y. Mineta, CA	Edward J. Patten, NJ	HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE
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L. Devine, OH	bougias Appiegace, on	Max Baucus, MT	Jim Mattox, TX
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· Collins, TX	John P. Hammerschmidt, AR	R-Elford A. Cederberg, MI	Marjorie S. Holt, MD
rey, Jr. FL	**Bud Shuster, PA	Robert H. Michel, IL **Silvio O. Conte, MA	John H. Rousselot, CA
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R. Madigan, IL	*Thad Cochran, MS	Mark Andrews, ND	Clair W. Burgener, CA
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on Moore, LA	Barry M. Goldwater, Jr., CA	John T. Myers, IN	
ockman, MI	*Tom Hagedorn, MN	J. Kenneth Robinson, VA	
Marks, PA	*Gary A. Myers, PA	Clarence E. Miller, OH	SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE
	Arlan Stangeland, MN	Lawrence Coughlin, PA	
m. on Commerce, Sci-	······································	C. W. Bill Young, FL	C-Edmund S. Muskie, ME
Transportation (Sub-			Warren G. Magnuson, WA
Surface Transp.)	Senate Comm on Banking Have	Jack F. Kemp, NY	Ernest F. Hollings, SC
	Senate Comm. on Banking, Hous-	William L. Armstrong, CO Ralph S. Regula, OH	Alan Cranston, CA
G. Magnuson, WA	ing & Urban Affairs (Subcomm.		Lawton Chiles, FL
	on Housing & Urban Affairs is	Clair W. Burgener, CA	James Abourezk, SD
W. Cannon, NV	the full comm. membership.)	*George M. O'Brien, IL	Joseph R. Biden, Jr., DE
B. Long, LA F. Hollings, SC	C-William Provening WT	Virginia Smith, NB	J. Bennett Johnston, LA
K. Inouye, HI	C-William Proxmire, WI **John Sparkman, AL	SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE	Wendell R. Anderson, MN
Stevenson, IL	Harrison A. Williams, Jr., NJ	(Subcomm. on Transportation	James R. Sasser, TN
, ocevenson, In	HULLISON A. WILLIAMS, Jr., NJ	(our transportation	R-Henny Bellmon OV

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Robert Dole, KS James A. McClure, ID Pete V. Domenici, NM Sam I. Hayakawa, CA

H. John Heinz III, PA

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elcher, MT B. Pearson, KS P. Griffin, MI evens, AK Goldwater, AZ kwood, OR

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W. Riegle, Jr., MI

Durkin, NH

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uter Mess (cont'd from p. 1)

Isportation . ().

I funds were provided for 100% of the difference previous and new subsidy levels for the year starting 976; 90% for the year starting April 1, 1977; and 50% for

onths starting April 1, 1978. e numbering of a "4R" Act paragraph dealing with on appears to have given Conrail the ultimate power f court action) for deciding what subsidy levels are ole. Conrail, however, has an obvious motive to extract as oney as possible from local transit authorities paying for ter rail service. Conrail has the Herculean task of saving theast's rail freight service (and thus the nation's) from lization, so, the more Conrail extracts in commuter rail its, the better Conrail will look when measured against the al projections set out for it in the U.S. Railway Association's

rail says it lost \$205.5 million compared with \$295 million ted by USRA, for its first nine months in operation — the ending December 31, 1976. However, USRA "has forecast tter winter weather added \$100 million of losses to Conrail's in January and February, on top of nearly \$70 million

ted earlier." Washington Post, April 1) ed with these challenges, Conrail's management, not singly, has neglected commuter rail and done a mediocre f operating those services. Reports from NARP members est that the quality of the ex-Reading service in the delphia area and the ex-Erie-Lackawanna services in ern New Jersey has declined, as did the ex-Penn Central

nrail has publicly touted new, more efficient freight ating procedures, but, judging from the subsidy requests n to the public agencies, has done nothing to get Penn

tral's outrageous commuter rail costs under control. oston was blessed with another railroad operating commuter ice: the Boston and Maine, bankrupt but reorganizing ependently of Conrail and under a respected management ded by Alan G. Dustin. B&M made a bid to operate the Conrail

We inadvertently omitted Eugene K. Skoropowski, of Melrose, MA (Region I), from the list of elected directors in he Feb. News. Our apologies — and our congratulations on his appointment as Chief of Operations Planning for the Commuter Rail Department of the MBTA. Another hardworking consumerist enters the transportation field professionally! Gene leaves a highly successful architectural practice to make the switch, and we wish him good luck in his new position.

ortion of the Boston suburban network. It is a tribute to Conrail's eed and/or incompetence that B&M was able to undercut

onrail's requirement while making a profit itself. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), hich pays for the services, is also happy, since the locally based nanagement will be more responsive. MBTA Director of perations David Gunn says: "If we need new wheels, for istance, we can tell B&M to buy them and charge them to us, and efore long the wheels will be there.' Doing this with Conrail was inheard of, he noted. If a schedule needs to be changed, it can be lone in a matter of days instead of the six months it used to take ust to add a train run or take one off service, Mr. Gunn

explained." (Christian Science Monitor, March 16) The Philadelphia area is not so lucky. There, Conrail controls all the commuter rail service, since the well-run Reading was included in Conrail, and Reading's commuter management has been decimated, with many people moving to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor operation. The danger is that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) does not have enough incentive (or bargaining leverage) to strike a fair bargain with Conrail, since SEPTA simply passes on the bills

commuter rail bills on grounds they were exorbitant. Bucks County has already refused to pay the full amount demanded by Conrail, and there is talk of running trains "closed-door" through the county, spreading the remaining costs among the other counties. And Conrail has refused to reduce its subsidy demands to correspond with a 20% fare increase just instituted for the its tr purpose of increasing revenues by \$3.6 million, lessening the

subsidy requirement by that amount.

The hope in Philadelphia is that, barring a favorable turn-about by Conrail, Amtrak, which owns most of the commuter trackage not acquired by SEPTA, could replace Conrail as the operating

company, and be reasonable in its subsidy requirements. The fate of the Delaware portion of the Phila.-Wilmington line,

which just had a 30% fare increase, is in doubt because Delaware has never subsidized it in the past, and may not come forward

Indiana did not squawk about the subsidy levels, which were now. similar to those presented earlier by Penn Central, because it is expected that the two weekday Chicago-Valparaiso round-trips will be discontinued next year, and that most passengers will shift to improved South Shore Line service. (Prospects look good at this

point for funding new equipment for the South Shore.) In New Jersey, negotiations are just beginning over the

Meanwhile, on April 1, Conrail posted 60-day notices of subsidy requirements. discontinuance along several commuter lines, including Washington-Baltimore and all of New Jersey except ex-Erie-Lackawanna lines, because of the failure of the transit authorities to agree to unprecedented demands by ConRail for total, openended indemnification against the costs of any catastrophic accidents. ConRail's demands were apparently triggered by the huge claims filed in the wake of the collision between two jumbo

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jets at a Canary Islands airport. It is hoped that this problem will be resolved by enactment of

legislation drafted by the concerned agencies. Meanwhile, on April 6, New Jersey won a restraining order in Federal District Court in Trenton forcing ConRail to take down the licat

Even if all the ConRail problems are solved, the transit agencies discontinuance notices.

paying for commuter rail still face trouble. Once the Northeast Federal aid program ends, these agencies will be — as most subway systems already are — at the mercy of a Federal operating subsidy program which effectively provides 50% aid for bus operations (even higher if one considers the effect of handicapped/elderly fares) and nothing for rails. The distribution formula is based on the densities and gross populations of urban areas rather than on transit ridership. Thus New York City, where transit dependency is highest, gets, on a per rider basis, the least

amount of UMTA Section 5 money. The Federal budget people who drafted the formula enacted under President Ford were reportedly instructed to tilt it against cities with rail services. We hope the new Administration will seek a ridership-based formula.

Massive changes in Amtrak's long-distance train schedules were to be implemented April 24. On June 7, the Seattle-Salt Lake City "Pioneer" will begin operation. It will connect in both directions with the "San Francisco Zephyr" to and from Denver-Omaha-Chicago, but only westbound with the tri-weekly "Rio Grande Zephyr" from Denver and Grand Junction, perhaps the nation's most scenic ride.

Trackwork on the Northeast Corridor began near Baltimore on March 31, as Secretary Adams and Amtrak's Paul Reistrup watched an 18 man surfacing and welding crew go into action. Larger track gangs were set to begin construction April 4 in Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland. DOT says that "an estimated \$120 million will be spent for manpower, materials and equipment during 1977. Approximately 6,000 people will be hired to lay continuous welded rail, replace ties, rehabilitate interlockings, install turnouts, clean ballast,

