
Subject: California to Pay More to Keep Surfliners?

From: Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)

To: ntbraymer@yahoo.com;

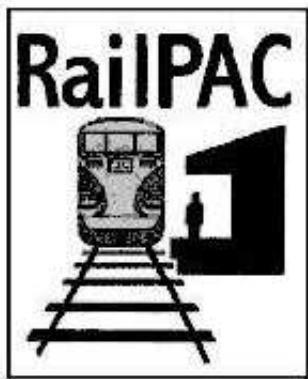
Date: Monday, February 25, 2013 9:30 AM

RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for February 25, 2013

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

Feel free to forward copies of this E-Newsletter to your friends or someone who can use this information.

If you would like to subscribe to the E-Newsletter just send me your name and email address to nbraymer@railpac.org



Rail Passenger Association of California
www.railpac.org
Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



Busy mid-day traffic at Oceanside. At left is Metrolink 851 which just arrived from Riverside at 12:50PM. At right is Surfliner 777 departing Oceanside at 12:52PM for San Luis Obispo. In summer this trains often runs with up to 9 cars. Southbound Surfliner 572 is scheduled to arrive at Oceanside by 1:01 PM shortly after the departure of the 777. The 572 would make a great connector for Metrolink passengers on the 851 for connections to Solana Beach and San Diego if people knew about it and connecting tickets were available. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[STATE MAY PAY FOR AMTRAK SUBSIDY](#)

U-T San Diego-Feb 20, 2013

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, approved by Congress in 2008, required states to agree to cost sharing formulas for operating, maintenance and capital costs on Amtrak routes under 750 miles (exempting the busy corridor from Boston to Washington, D.C.)

In California, there is already precedent for the state covering Amtrak subsidies — to the tune of \$90 million a year. That covers the operating subsidy for rail lines in the San Joaquin Valley (with a state subsidy since 1979) and the Capitol Corridor (covered since 1991).

This new Federal bill could increase the State's payment to Amtrak up to 25 million dollars from about 100 million which would blow a hole in the budget of State Rail Program. The service which would be charged more is the Surfliner. This is because 3 Surfliner Trains which predate the State subsidizing local service that California wasn't being charged at the same rate as the other Surfliners. These 3 trains connect with Long Distance Trains will now be charged to the State for 100% of what are called avoidable costs but often are Amtrak's fixed costs. NB

[Three Ways to Get Amtrak Back on the Rails](#)

Bloomberg-Feb 19, 2013

They last talked seriously about reforming it in 1997, when President Bill Clinton signed a reform plan into

law. It failed to make the railroad self-sufficient

The problem was Amtrak and the Northeast States blocked implementation of the recommendations of the Amtrak Reform Council. This would have taken ownership of the Northeast Corridor away from Amtrak to a new joint Federal/local States Agency which would run the NEC. This would save Amtrak a great deal of money by giving it much lower fixed overhead costs. This new NEC agency would have had the job of increasing revenues for the NEC by seeking joint commercial development of stations and increasing freight traffic. The prospect of increased fees for commuter trains that use the NEC was a major factor in opposition to this plan. In the 15 years or so before the Amtrak Reform Council was created in 1997 Amtrak had growing revenue and reductions in subsidy with expanded Long Distance service. The expectation in 1993 was that by 2000 Amtrak would break even. With management change at Amtrak after 1993 Long Distance service was cut "to save money on avoidable costs" and a great deal of money was borrowed to build the ACELA High Speed Train service between Washington and Boston. By 2000 the Amtrak Reform Council warned Amtrak that this heavy borrowing would cause serious problems. By 2002 Amtrak almost ran out of cash to operate because of payments of its debts and because the introduction of the ACELA trains had been delayed and revenue from them fell short of expectations that they would be Amtrak's "Glide Path to Profitability". While Amtrak has made progress reducing its operating subsidy, most of its Federal Funding goes to repairing the NEC and paying off its old debts which keeps the subsidy for Amtrak near 1 and a half billion dollars a year. Little of this Federal money goes for anything outside of the NEC. NB

[Double Tracking In Del Mar](#)

Del Mar Times

The purpose of the project is to eliminate a significant bottleneck in the passage of trains south of Solana Beach, improve safety, and do away with trains having to sit idle waiting at a siding as another train passes on the single track. The special events platform is intended to be used only during the Fair and racing season, will encourage visitors to commute on the train, and reduce traffic.

[San Juan to implement 'quiet zones' at 5 rail crossings](#)

OCRegister-Feb 20, 2013

Starting March 15, San Juan Capistrano residents may not have to put up with as much train noise, as the City Council voted Tuesday night to implement "quiet zones" at five public crossings.

[Caltrans blitz seeks more Amtrak riders](#)

San Francisco Chronicle-Feb 17, 2013

Caltrans has tentatively picked an outfit called Tmdgroup for a three-year campaign intended to boost ridership on three Amtrak routes in the state, including the Capitol Corridor line from San Jose to Auburn (Placer County).

[Why Trains need Buses](#)

Analysis by Noel T. Braymer

Trains can't go everywhere, but buses can go to many places or when trains can't. Buses can economically carry passengers to trains when it isn't possible to use trains. Combining trains and buses can make travel faster for passengers to more places while increasing ridership and revenue for trains. This has been proven with bus connections in California to State supported Corridor Trains. The buses connecting with these trains do so at a profit. If they don't the bus route is eliminated.

[Federal Spending Cuts Threaten Delays in Air Travel](#)

New York Times Feb 21, 2013

WASHINGTON — Airlines and airports across the country are preparing for across-the-board federal budget cuts due to hit next week as if they were a hurricane, although with even less certainty about how many flights they will have to cancel and how many passengers will be stranded. The federal government is warning about delays that could begin in March, as the first cuts take effect, and reduced takeoffs and slower security lines that could worsen in April with furloughs.

Like it or not transportation is dependent on government spending. NB

[Auto Club: Gas Prices Post Record One-Month Jump](#)

Patch.com-Feb 21, 2013

Southern California gas prices have now spiked by 57 cents or more in the past month – one of the biggest one-month jumps ever, according to ...

[California Lawmaker Proposes New Oil Tax Amid Rising Gas Prices](#)

CBS Local- Feb 21, 2013

But, a new oil tax is exactly what Sen. Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa) is suggesting.

“California is the only oil-producing state in the nation that does not have an oil extraction tax. States such as Texas, Oklahoma, and Alaska have such a tax, and it just makes common sense,” Evans said.

[Richard wins second term as California High-Speed Rail Authority's ...](#)

Progressive Rail Roding- Feb 19, 2013

During his tenure, the authority took several major steps to prepare for work on the high-speed system, which is slated to begin this summer, authority officials said in a prepared statement.

[Landowners drop lawsuit against high-speed rail](#)

Bakersfield Californian- Feb 22, 2013

A collection of landowners whose properties are in the path of proposed high-speed trains in Madera and Fresno counties have dropped their lawsuit against the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

[High-Speed Rail Won't Be Four Tracks on the Peninsula, Officials ...](#)

Patch.com-by Stacie Chan- Feb 21, 2013

Legislation calls for limiting California high-speed rail on the Peninsula to two tracks along the Caltrain right-of-way, not four.

[Sacramento seeks new name for downtown train station](#)

Sacramento Bee-Feb 21, 2013

Quick, do you know the official name of Sacramento's downtown train station?

[Fact Sheet: The President's Plan To Make America A Magnet For Jobs By Investing In Infrastructure](#)

Whitehouse.gov Feb 20, 2013

Repair and maintenance of our existing roads, bridges and public transportation systems should take priority before we consider investing in new facilities. This will ensure that our cities are safer and more modern. But taxpayers shouldn't have to shoulder the entire burden either. We also know that America works best when we're tapping the resources and ingenuity of a vibrant private sector.

[Sounder Northline, Amtrak service canceled Monday and Tuesday](#)

Q13 FOX-Feb 17, 2013

EVERETT — Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company closed train tracks used by Amtrak Cascades and Sounder Northline passenger services between Seattle and Everett for Monday and Tuesday following a mudslide.