
Subject: Sorry Charlie, California High Speed Rail still isn't dead!

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

To: ntbraymer@yahoo.com;

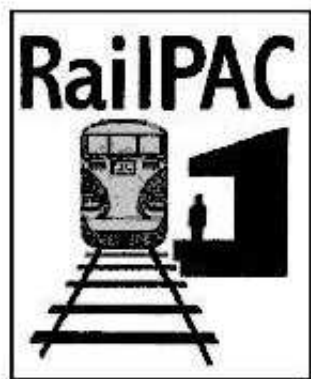
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for December 2, 2013

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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



This is a CHSRA image of future construction in Fresno. The recent court ruling on California High Speed Rail only effects funding from State Bonds and won't effect current construction planned around Fresno. The judge's order doesn't permanently halt future use of the voter approved bonds for HSR construction. What the judge wants is a complete financial plan for funding the Initial Operating Segment before he will release the bonds.

[California bond sale for high-speed rail project blocked by judge](#)

Reuters - Nov 25, 2013

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - A California judge ruled on Monday against the state's plan to issue more than \$8 billion in bonds to help build an 800-mile high-speed train system and rescinded the project's funding plan, which estimates the system's cost at ...

[Judge Michael Kenny's decision could force the state to spend ...](#)

Daily Mail-Nov 27, 2013

The authority's CEO, Jeff Morales, disagreed with claims by the opponents that the judge's rulings would send high-speed rail planners back to the drawing board, saying officials are confident they can address the judge's concerns quickly.

When asked how much time it could take, he said, 'Not long. We don't think that addressing that will have any material effect on the project.'

The rail authority had argued that it has already updated its funding plan and that it intends to spend \$3.2 billion in federal money before tapping the state bonds.

[Bullet train snag could affect Transbay Terminal](#)

San Francisco Chronicle-Nov 27, 2013

Although the station itself is fully funded, much of the \$2.5 billion needed to build the 1.5 miles of track from the Transbay Terminal to the existing rail terminus at Fourth and Townsend streets "still needs to be secured," said Adam Alberti, spokesman for the Transbay Joint Powers Authority.

[What's the Future of California High Speed Rail?](#)

Opinion by Noel T. Braymer

As of now the State has committed 4.5 billion of the 9.95 billion dollars available in the Prop 1A bonds. Of this 2.6 billion is the State's share for construction in the San Joaquin Valley. The other 1.9 billion is for projects that include upgrades to existing railroads that High Speed Trains will share for use in urban

areas. Much of this 1.9 billion will also go to help build new rail transit services which will feed passengers to future high speed rail stations.

[Editorial: High-speed rail proceeds in fits and starts](#)

Sacramento Bee - Nov 27, 2013

In a mixed ruling on Monday, Kenny did not question going forward with the project. So the gleeful comment that “The high-speed rail project is derailed,” by Jon Coupal, president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, is an extravagant exaggeration.

The judge did not invalidate the July 2012 legislative appropriation for the high-speed rail program — authorizing spending of \$3.3 billion in federal grants and \$4.7 billion in Proposition 1A bonds.

But the judge’s ruling cannot be sugarcoated. He did deliver a major setback that will delay the issuance of voter-approved Proposition 1A bonds by months.

[Rail Service We Need Before High Speed Rail in California](#)

Opinion by Noel T. Braymer

In 2012 the Legislature approved 13 billion dollars from several sources for spending towards rail passenger service. Almost 6 billion dollars of this was for 130 miles of High Speed Rail construction in the San Joaquin Valley. The remaining 7 billion was towards a large number of improvements for rail transit, commuter rail service and State intercity rail service. This 7 billion went towards such projects as electrification of Caltrain, track extension from the Caltrain station to the new Transbay Transit Center, the regional subway connector in Los Angeles, run-through tracks at LAUS, track improvements between Palmdale and Anaheim, expansion of the San Diego Trolley and more. To partially fund most of these projects, about 1.9 billion dollars will come from the 9.95 billion in High Speed Rail Bond money.

[Government rules require California's high-speed trains to be built in ...](#)

Fresno Bee- Dec 1, 2013

Siemens, headquartered in Germany, is one of the key players in the worldwide high-speed rail market. Others include France's Alstom, Canada's Bombardier, Spain's Talgo, Italy's AnsaldoBreda, Japan's Hitachi and Nippon Sharyo and Korea's Hyundai Rotem.

But none of those companies — and no U.S. firms — are building that kind of train in America.

Exhibit 2-4. IOS-South/Blended



The IOS-South/Central Valley to Los Angeles Basin section will connect with transit options allowing passengers to reach a wide range of regional destinations.

[Amtrak halted in Rensselaer](#)

Albany Times Union-Dec 1, 2013

Amtrak Empire Line Service is currently being held between New York City and Albany due to the deadly early morning derailment of a Metro-North commuter train in the Bronx.

Amtrak's Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington is not affected.

[Four Dead in NYC Metro-North Train Derailment, 63 Injured](#)

ABC News - Dec 1, 2013

At least four people were killed and 63 injured after a Metro-North passenger train derailed on a sharp curve in the Bronx borough of New York City on Sunday morning, officials said. Eleven people were in critical condition at area hospitals, according to New ...

[Taking Amtrak at Thanksgiving? Don't leave home without a reservation](#)

Los Angeles Times-Nov 26, 2013

To make room for more Thanksgiving passengers the company will add 4,200 seats to the Pacific Surfliner, 700 seats to the Capitol Corridor between Auburn and San Jose (no reservations required) and 600 seats to the San Joaquin service between Bakersfield and Sacramento. (Reservations are always required on this route.)

[Amtrak reopens 30th Street Station west plaza](#)

Philly.com-Nov 25, 2013

Just in time for the Thanksgiving travel rush, Amtrak reopened the western entrance, or west plaza, at 30th Street Station Friday.

[My Best Boarding Tip for DC's Union Station](#)

Slate Magazine -Nov 27, 2013

Ever since I published my groundbreaking findings about the best way to board Amtrak at New York's Penn Station (not that I would claim to have discovered this, it's just that traditionally people kept it secret), people have been asking me if there's some way to work around the equally irrationally queuing at D.C.'s Union Station. The answer is: sometimes.

[Amtrak Crescent With 218 Aboard Disabled in South Carolina](#)

TIME-Nov 25, 2013

There were no serious injuries, Amtrak said of the 207 passengers and 11 crew members aboard when the cars derailed shortly after midnight in the countryside on a frosty night with 20-degree readings from a cold front sweeping the Southeast.

[Amtrak service may leave western Kansas if track funding not found](#)

Topeka Capital Journal- Nov 28, 2013

Dennis Slimmer, bureau chief of transportation planning for KDOT, said Amtrak and BNSF approached the transportation departments in Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico about funding \$100 million in improvements to a span of track beginning in western Kansas. The tracks are owned by BNSF, but only serve about four trains per day, including two runs by Amtrak's Southwest Chief passenger line, which runs from Chicago to Los Angeles, he said.

Andy Williams, spokesman for BNSF, said the company is willing to pay for maintenance on its rails to support the low speeds used by freight trains, but if Amtrak wants higher speeds it will have to pay for the extra work.

[High Speed 'Trains of the Future' May Finally Be Coming to the Northeast](#)

Daily Beast-Nov 25, 2013

It may seem improbable, but the odds that faster trains are coming to the Northeast Corridor have jumped recently. That's because beginning in 2015, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is expected to finally permit modern European designs on tracks throughout the country, running side by side with heavy freight, at all times of day. This decision could cut the weight of U.S. passenger trains in half, meaning trains can go faster, accelerate more quickly, cause less wear on tracks, and get passengers to their destination in less time.

This story shows that the FRA crash strength standards imposed on the construction of the Acela trains in the 1990's was a bad idea. They impaired the Acela trainset's performance while making them less safe than European equipment. NB

[Stuck in neutral](#)

Boston Globe-Nov 24, 2013

Dukakis says Amtrak trains will hit 220 miles per hour by 2040. Pataki, who unsuccessfully championed high-speed rail from New York City to Albany as governor, sees Dukakis and raises him 91 miles per hour. Just named to the advisory board of the magnetic levitation firm Northeast Maglev, Pataki promises it will whisk passengers with magnets, not wheels, at 311 miles per hour. It's not science fiction; China has one in Shanghai.

[High-speed rail between the International airport and Reykjavik](#)

News of Iceland-Nov 29, 2013

"This idea has been looked into a few times before. What has changed during the past five years however is twofold. On one hand there have been great technological advances in train transportation regarding high-speed rails that make the traveling time much shorter. On the other hand there has been a large increase in the number of tourists traveling through the international airport, which creates a source of income for a project like this." said Runolfur Agustsson.

[China to help Romania high-speed rail](#)

Global Times - Nov 25, 2013

China Premier Li Keqiang and his Romania counterpart Victor Ponta agreed on Monday that their two countries would cooperate in building high-speed railways in Romania. After their talks, the two leaders also witnessed the signing of series of cooperation ...

[Sacramento train mystery: What happened to the passengers?](#)

Sacramento Bee Nov 26, 2013

Passenger levels dropped 6 percent this year at Sacramento Valley Station in downtown Sacramento and 5 percent in Davis, Kutrosky said. Combined, the two stations accounted for 88 percent of ridership losses on the system, which has 17 stations, and runs from Auburn to San Jose. A total of 1.7 million passengers rode the Capitol Corridor train in fiscal 2013, a 2.6 percent drop from the prior year.

[Metal debris causes major BART delays](#)

Contra Costa Times Nov 26, 2013

The Associated Press OAKLAND, Calif.—Metal debris on a Bay Area Rapid Transit track in Oakland caused major delays during Tuesday's evening commute.

BART spokeswoman Alicia Trost said the debris was found at about 6:15 p.m. between the opening of the Transbay Tube and the West Oakland station.

[Improving Bay Area Economy Pushing Caltrain Ridership To Limit](#)

CBS Local-Nov 29, 2013

"We're up to about 54,000 [riders], so these are all-time levels," said Caltrain board member Ken Yeager. "I've been on the Caltrain board for 13 years and remember when it was sort of in this 30,000 level, but the fact that we're up to 52,000, 54,000 really should show you the incredible increase in capacity and ridership that we're having."

[Caltrain Makes It Easy to Park Your Bike and Ride](#)

Patch.com-Dec 1, 2013

Increased bike capacity on trains, and more bike lockers and bike racks at Caltrain stations encourages cyclists to use the rail system.

[Task force: billions needed to fix transit in S.F](#)

SFGate Nov 25, 2013

San Francisco's transportation system - famous for its slow Muni buses, pothole-pocked streets and

inadequate bike and pedestrian amenities - needs a lot of help: \$10.1 billion worth, a task force appointed by the mayor has concluded.

And, the panel adds, city leaders should ask voters to approve nearly \$3 billion in taxes, bonds and fees to help pay the bill.

[Transportation Infrastructure: Building Hope for the Future](#)

Inbound Logistics July 2013

As U.S. industry confronts the realities of a failing transportation system and looming capacity crunch, does MAP-21 offer the promise of improvement?

When Gil Carmichael discusses the feasibility of a national transportation plan, it's apparent a huge and glaring need exists—but the solution is clear, and well within reach.

"When I visualize it, I get excited about what it could be and how easy it is to do—if we think intermodally," he says....

For Carmichael, the solution is clear and simple—and draws less distinction between passenger and freight modes, because they are inherently linked.

"You cannot plan people movement without planning goods movement," he says.

As far as transportation goes, rail is the foundation, the most economical means for moving freight. Since deregulation, the railroads have demonstrated an earnest commitment to investing in infrastructure and developing their service capabilities.

[Postcards from the West: Union Station bustles with film plots](#)

L.A. Times Nov 22, 2013

Many movies have been shot at Los Angeles Union Station. But none can match the one you start filming in your head the moment you arrive from Alameda Street...

It's a star in its own right, this building

[LAX and Metro call for changes to light rail station](#)

Daily Breeze Nov 22, 2013

Los Angeles World Airports and Metro plan to make relatively minor changes to construction on a soon-to-be built rail station at Aviation and Century Boulevards that could someday make it easier for Los Angeles International Airport to build a ground transportation center and consolidated rental car facility... City leaders — led by Mayor Eric Garcetti and Councilman Mike Bonin, whose district includes the airport — have made linking rail to LAX a priority. It is not clear how that will happen, but officials are exploring various options, mostly centered around the Crenshaw and Green lines.

[Meeting of Southern California Transit Advocates](#)

The guest speaker at the Dec. 14th meeting of Southern California Transit Advocates is Linda Culp of the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency. This will be at 255 S. Hill Street (4th floor) in downtown Los Angeles, one block north of the 4th Street Red/Purple Line Pershing Square station exit. The event starts at 2 p.m. and after the presentation there will be a period for questions and answers by attendees. It is free and open to the public.

Among the topics will be the status of the transition to Orange County Transportation Authority being the local managing agency to oversee the Pacific Surfliner.

[SAN BERNARDINIO: Metrolink train delayed](#)

Press-Enterprise (blog)-Nov 29, 2013

A Metrolink train outbound from Union Station to San Bernardino was delayed 25 minutes by mechanical problems Friday morning, Nov. 29.

[Tax Break For Mass-Transit Commutes May Soon Be Slashed](#)

NPR-Nov 29, 2013

The transit tax break expires at the end of the year. So starting Jan. 1, the benefit for riders will be cut nearly in half — to \$130 a month. Drivers, on the other hand, will get a slightly bigger break as their parking benefit rises to \$250.

[Crossrail: Britain's biggest archeological dig will transform London](#)

The Guardian Nov 23, 2013

Sometimes, when flying over a landscape, you see a seam of unexpected fecundity – lush trees, richer green – that indicates the presence of water or a change to a more fertile soil. Something similar is happening across London. ...

This is the effect of the underground Nile called Crossrail and it will show what happens when £14.8bn of public money is streamed underground in order to irrigate a city and its development opportunities above.

[Phillips 66 plans to build San Luis Obispo County rail terminal](#)

Los Angeles Times-Nov 26, 2013

Phillips 66, which operates refineries across California, is moving forward with a plan to build a rail terminal in San Luis Obispo County that would send trains with up to 80 tank cars of crude oil through Southern California and the Bay Area.

In a draft environmental impact statement filed this week, Phillips said it wants to build five sets of parallel tracks that would accommodate trains as often as 250 times per year at its Santa Maria Refinery.



Yes, it is that time again. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

Re: Bad Train News

Your latest email news update sounded like a series of anti-Amtrak talking points. It's no wonder people have such negative views of the service. Try to include some good news next time.

Eric Cooper

Mission Viejo, California

I like good news too. But I don't write the news, I collect what I can find online. What was remarkable about the previous week were the number of stories of Amtrak trains breaking down. Unfortunately this isn't uncommon. I couldn't help but wonder if this cluster of problems was related to the shake-up of management at Amtrak. There are some outstanding people who worked most of their career at Amtrak. It is disturbing to find that some of them are leaving because of their frustration with management. While bad news is never welcomed, ignoring problems won't make them go away. NB

Re: Refurbished Cars not wonderful

We use Amtrak long distance often and while we appreciate the improvement in cleanliness on many of the trains, there are still items that have not been addressed. We were traveling between Chicago and Portland on the Empire Builder in early November and our deluxe bedroom was "upgraded", but we had heavy coats, clothing, etc. due to winter weather (snow all the way) but there are still no hooks for those extra items. The tiny closet doesn't come close to storing our clothing (sweaters, heavier slacks, etc.) for the night or room for our heavy overcoats--even in nice weather we need hooks in the room. When we happen to board one of the older cars with the hooks we send up a cheer!! Also, it is nice to have the upgraded touch lighting, etc., but there are no longer the dials to turn off the announcements night and day. It is very disturbing to try taking a nap and being awakened by the dining car calling people to their reservation or announcements of upcoming stations, and if you want to sleep a little later in the morning--forget it! Just had to air our complaints! Thanks for keeping us informed--we much enjoy the RailPac on-line newsletters.

Jim and Cathy Schamp

Re: More Thunder Needed

Given where things are, this could well be the death knell of long distance passenger rail in this country. When train advocates talk only to themselves everyone goes to sleep. You've got a good cause; but you need thunder. NARP is pathetic. Railpac is a little better, but also very quiet, at least in No. Cal. TRAC no longer exists in any meaningful sense of the word.

Nelson Wong

Amy Gu

Stephen Phang

of San Francisco and Berkeley

I can't speak for the other 2 organizations you mentioned. But we have 3 very active RailPAC Board Members in the Bay Area with Art Lloyd, Bruce Jenkins and Marcus Jung. Art in particular is very busy even in his 80's. After a long career in Passenger Rail service including being one of the first Amtrak employees, he is now on the board of several government bodies including Caltrain, Coast Rail Coordinating Council which seeks to expand rail service from the San Francisco to Los Angeles and California Operation Livesaver among others. Any group can be loud and wrong. Such groups don't have credibility and are ignored by people in power. RailPAC works hard to be right and well informed. The problem to getting change with most public agencies is they are mostly worried about their funding and adverse to doing anything that could get them in trouble with elected officials who control their budget. Convincing elected officials who have more than just transportation issues to worry about and getting several of them to work together is a slow process, particularly after years of budget deficits. NB

Re: Rail history comes alive

A good friend of mine, Bob Battles, forwarded your newsletter to me. I want to thank you for a fine issue - well-written, wide-ranging, and most enjoyable. I saw your email address at the end. I'm sending a brief description and some photos of a remarkable event that took place south of York, PA (home of the TCA York Meet in April and October), during the week of November 10.

Philip Smith



Here is a replica of an old Central Pacific Locomotive LEVIATHAN. It was bought to York, PA along with a similar locomotive the YORK to commemorate President Lincoln's trip to the dedication of the Gettysburg Cemetery (where the Gettysburg address was given) in November 1863 which traveled through York, PA.NB

Re:"What's Up with the Coaster?"

"As it is there is no connecting bus service between Sorrento Valley, UTC and UCSD in this highly traffic congested area."

The 978 and 979 ferry passengers up to Torrey Mesa and UTC, respectively. But their schedules are extremely limited (and I have never used these "Coaster Connections" so I don't know how reliable they are).

There is also a shuttle operated by UCSD to the Sorrento Valley coaster station. It is available only to those with "a valid UCSD ID and either a monthly or quarterly Coaster Pass or transit pass".

Matthew Fedder

(P.S. When I see your name abbreviated NB, it reminds me of Nota bene, which is often abbreviated NB and which my first supervisor used excessively in documentation.)

The Coaster Shuttles do a good job getting Coaster Passengers around during rush hours in the region. Although they do get stuck in the same traffic as cars. The point I was trying to make is there is little or no bus service throughout the day to or from Torrey Mesa , Carrol Canyon or Sorrento Valley to each other or to UCSD or UTC. This is not uncommon in commercial areas built since the 1960's. There will be no connections by Trolley either when it gets to UTC to Sorrento Valley, Torrey Mesa or Carrol Canyon. This is the first I've heard of Nota bene (note well) . But then I'm still trying to figure out what my daughter writes when she uses mostly text message abbreviations in emails to me. NB

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Rail Passenger Association of California.

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policymakers at all levels!

You can send your comments to me at nbraymer@railpac.org

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Write:

Rail Passenger Association of California

1017 L Street, PMB-217

Sacramento, CA95814-3805

Email us at info@railpac.org

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