

<b>Subject:</b>	Happy Holidays, Feds clear CA HSR lawsuits, Transit CEO's well paid, Cap and Trade force electrification by 2050?
<b>From:</b>	Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)
<b>To:</b>	ntbraymer@yahoo.com;
<b>Date:</b>	Monday, December 22, 2014 9:30 AM

## **RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for December 22, 2014**

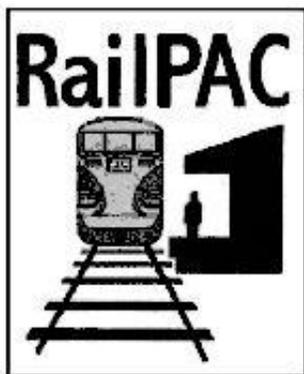
Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Looking back at 2014, this year was the 75 anniversary of Los Angeles Union Station. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [Federal Ruling A Win For California's Bullet Train](#)

CBS Local-Dec 15, 2014

SACRAMENTO (AP) — A federal agency that has jurisdiction over California's bullet train has ruled that it has the authority to pre-empt state environmental law, creating uncertainty for numerous groups fighting the project in court.

### [High-speed rail project settles Bakersfield lawsuit](#)

Visalia Times-Delta - Dec 19, 2014

SACRAMENTO – The California High-Speed Rail Authority announced Friday that it has settled one of seven environmental lawsuits challenging the route of the \$68 billion bullet train through the Central Valley.

The settlement with the city of Bakersfield calls for officials to consider alternative routes through the Kern County city, and a new location for a Bakersfield train station if a new route is chosen. Authority spokeswoman Lisa Marie Alley said the authority will hold community meetings to gather comments.

**The Surface Transportation Board ruling that it can over rule local state environmental laws would have brought the dismissal of the Bakersfield Lawsuit if the city hadn't settled. The six other lawsuits still pending will likely be soon settled or dismissed. NB**

### [Bullet Train Officials Digesting Public's Concerns](#)

SCVNEWS.com-Dec 18, 2014

“Now is a critical time for communities impacted by any of the routes proposed by the High-Speed Rail Authority to provide their input and request information and ask any question they have to ensure that their voice is heard as the authority continues to modify and examine the alternatives that have been provided so far,” said Michael Cano, transportation deputy to Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich.

### [LA reviewing \\$4 billion people-mover for airport](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Dec 19, 2014

City News Service says the Airport Commission voted Thursday to begin studying the idea of an automated train that would take people around the airport, to and from a rental car center and a nearby Metro rail station....

### [Airport officials approve plan for people mover at LAX](#)

The Source Dec 18, 2014

The future Landside Access Modernization Program includes a new automated LAX Train that will connect passengers to the airline terminals from new facilities at the airport including a Rental Car Center, multiple locations for passenger pick-up and drop-off, and Metro’s planned Crenshaw Line station at 96th Street/Aviation Boulevard. The plan is designed to relieve congestion in the Central Terminal Area (CTA) as well as on local streets surrounding the airport...

The Board’s vote sets the groundwork for the LAX Landside Access Modernization Program to begin the environmental review process in January 2015. Construction is expected to begin in 2017.

### [RailPAC trip report PHOTOS for Christmas \(2014\)](#)

This is a SPECIAL 10 PHOTO EDITION. All the photos (except one) are from Russ Jackson on his family’s Fall trip across the country. To see these photos larger, click on the photo. To read the full trip report, see “Trip Report on the Texas Eagle and other trains: How was it?” that was posted on this site on November 28.



This is near the site of the Fresno High Speed Rail station in downtown Fresno. The building behind the Greyhound Bus Station is the old Southern Pacific Train Station building. Just past that will be the new High Speed Rail Station. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [18 Amtrak cars, built locally, head to Florida](#)

Elmira Star-Gazette-Dec 17, 2014

"This is a culmination of over two years' worth of work from a lot of folks here in the community. Just to see them go down the road is really satisfying," said Mark Smith, CAF USA director of manufacturing.

The cars are part of Amtrak's effort to modernize its fleet and will arrive around 9 p.m. Friday at Amtrak's Hialeah, Fla., maintenance facility for final inspection. They are slated to enter service early next year on long-distance routes.

### [New Orleans loses lopsided court fight with Amtrak over 'prison' fence](#)

NOLA.com-Dec 17, 2014

An attempt by New Orleans officials to block Amtrak from building a chain fence along a stretch of boulevard in the heart of the city has failed, though the passenger-train company won't top it with razor wire as previously planned.

### [Amtrak and INDOT still negotiating the future of Indiana's passenger ...](#)

Purdue Exponent-Dec 16, 2014

For months, Amtrak, along with other possible competitors, has been in negotiations with Indiana's Department of Transportation concerning the continued operation of the Hoosier State Line past the current deadline of Jan. 31, 2015. One of the main competitors that was posed to replace Amtrak, Corridor Capital, is now out of negotiations with INDOT and will not be replacing Amtrak.

### [Amtrak readies Vermonter reroute](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Dec 15, 2014

A long-awaited reroute of Amtrak's Vermonter will commence on Dec. 29, 2014, as the nation's intercity passenger carrier begins serving Greenfield and Northampton, Mass. on a more direct route along the so-called "Knowledge Corridor" stretching from New Haven, Conn., to St. Albans, Vt.

### [Omnibus bill trims TIGER grants, maintains Amtrak funding](#)

Progressive Rail Roading-Dec 16, 2014

The \$1.1 trillion omnibus spending bill passed by Congress last weekend includes \$500 million for the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program, holds allocations for the Federal Highway and Federal Transit administrations to the same amount of Highway Trust Fund dollars as in fiscal-year 2014, and maintains level funding for Amtrak, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Journal reported.

### [Emergency Amtrak work to delay MARC trains in Baltimore through Wednesday](#)

Baltimore Sun-Dec 15, 2014

The unscheduled work on tracks between the West Baltimore MARC station and Penn Station was announced Monday, and will last through Wednesday, requiring trains to single track through the area.

### [Amtrak CEO says B&P tunnel replacement study may be 'waste of time...](#)

Baltimore Sun-Dec 19, 2014

Boardman called on Congress to create a designated funding stream for rail projects nationwide, saying the lack of secure funding leaves the government-owned passenger rail system unable to make progress on infrastructure needs up and down the busy Northeast Corridor, including the B&P Tunnel replacement, estimated to cost \$1.5 billion.

### [NYC subway extension may transform Manhattan neighborhood](#)

Reuters Dec18, 2014

The city's transit authority has been working for seven years on the \$2.4 billion extension of the Number 7 subway line...

The new station is intended to be the linchpin of the Hudson Yards development, with more than a dozen skyscrapers, a cultural center and parks replacing a neighborhood once dominated by rundown industrial buildings.

Key to the project's success is its route, through the city's busiest transit hubs of Grand Central and Times Square, opening up the far west side to the entire mass transit system, said Mitchell Moss, professor of urban planning at New York University. It will also serve as an entry point to the popular High Line elevated park.



This is a photo from February 21, 2014 of the state of construction for ARTIC transportation center in Anaheim which just opened this month. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [Anaheim streetcar study delayed until next year](#)

OC Register Dec 18, 2014

The \$320 million project would cover 3.2 miles between the Disney resorts and ARTIC.

The study was due out this month, but Anaheim's Public Works Department is following the City Council's request to evaluate options for the 3.2-mile route between the resort area and the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center, city spokeswoman Ruth Ruiz said.

Early next year, city officials plan to release a schedule to build the proposed streetcar line, which is slated to operate by 2018.

### [Metrolink CEO will resign amid scrutiny over finances; are more ..](#)

.OCRegister-Dec 16, 2014

"There's something seriously flawed with the whole concept and the whole government," Dyson said.

"It's a failure in that after 20 years, (Metrolink is) still only generating about 40,000 trips a day, and that number is in decline, whereas just about every other public transit agency in the country is expanding."

### [Metrolink Needs a Plan, and some Leadership](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

Metrolink has failed to fulfill its mission to be the Southern California Regional Rail Passenger Railroad.

The official name for Metrolink is the Southern California Regional Rail Authority. Instead the management of Metrolink at its inception was under the impression that they were running a commuter railroad to primarily carry people to downtown Los Angeles.

## [Millions Being Spent to Improve California's Rail Lines, Highways](#)

KFBK-Dec 16, 2014

One big project will use more than \$100 million to buy diesel-electric locomotives and bi-level passenger rail-cars to boost intercity rail service, by adding capacity and replacing old Amtrak-owned trains.

## [The Chart That Topped San Diego's Long-Term Transportation Plan](#)

CityLab Dec 18, 2014

Late last month, a California appeals court upheld an earlier decision that undermined San Diego's massive, \$214 billion plan for regional mobility through the year 2050. The ruling is expected to be appealed, but if it holds, the metro area's entire highway and transit network might be transformed as a result. And as if that weren't enough, the precedent would also strengthen climate policy in California cities for years to come.

By 2050, the state hopes to cut greenhouse gas levels by 80 percent of their 1990 levels—as spelled out in an executive order signed in 2005 by then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger...

Contrast that with the emissions trends forecasted in San Diego's long-term transportation plan... by 2050 they're either at or above current levels. It's the complete opposite of everything the state hopes to achieve.

**For San Diego, or other California Cities to meet the 2050 emission goals will require more zero emission cars and trains. That generally means more electric cars and trains. NB**

## [Bankers See \\$1 Trillion of Zombie Investments Stranded in the Oil ...](#)

Bloomberg-Dec 18, 2014

After crude prices dropped 49 percent in six months, oil projects planned for next year are the undead -- still standing upright, but with little hope of a productive future. These zombie projects proliferate in expensive Arctic oil, deepwater-drilling regions and tar sands from Canada to Venezuela.

In a stunning analysis this week, Goldman Sachs found almost \$1 trillion in investments in future oil projects at risk. They looked at 400 of the world's largest new oil and gas fields -- excluding U.S. shale - - and found projects representing \$930 billion of future investment that are no longer profitable with Brent crude at \$70. In the U.S., the shale-oil party isn't over yet, but zombies are beginning to crash it.

## [Oil Crash Exposes Shale Drillers in Risky Three-Way Bets](#)

Bloomberg Dec 19, 2014

Tumbling oil prices have exposed a weakness in the insurance that some U.S. shale drillers bought to protect themselves against a crash.

## [Who Will Get Caught When The Oil Debt Bubble Pops?](#)

Forbes-Dec 19, 2014

The mountain of debt advanced to drillers in recent years is estimated to be in the neighborhood of \$500 billion — some \$300 billion in leveraged loans and another \$200 billion in high yield debt. That's about 16% of the U.S. high yield debt market, quadruple its share a decade ago. That's a lot, even when weighed against the roughly \$1.6 trillion in annual investment required to provide the people of the world with energy.

## [½ cent tax key to ACE](#)

Manteca Bulletin-Dec 16, 201

Altamont Corridor Express trains could be stopping in downtown Manteca as well as downtown Ripon within five years if Stanislaus County voters approve their own version of San Joaquin County's half cent Measure K transportation sales tax during the next election cycle.

## [NCTD chief's raise doesn't exactly catapult him to the top](#)

U-T San Diego-Dec 20, 2014

Among more than 2,000 public transit and transportation planning employees statewide, Tucker ranked No. 25 with \$259,968 in total wages in 2012, data submitted to the state controller shows. That's behind the chief executive at the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System, at No. 5 with \$337,319 in wages. Also, the head of the transportation planning agency San Diego Association of Governments came in at No. 13, with \$298,121 in wages.

### [Los Angeles by light rail: how to get around Southern Cal...](#)

OregonLive.com-Dec 19, 2014

The Metro: L.A. Metro combines trains with rapid bus lines, but I focused on the trains. I purchased a Tap Card at the train vending machine for \$20, which was more than enough to cover my four days of travel at \$1.75 per ride. The card is plastic and reloadable, making it easy to use once you get familiar. Tap it at the reader, it deducts the fare and shows the remaining value and you're good to go. Trains run frequently, weren't overly crowded and have service about 20 hours a day.



View of the bridge over Venice Blvd.at Culver City for the Expo Line extension to Santa Monica as of February 2014. Now most of the rail has been laid and the rest of the construction will be finished next year. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [SMART needs another \\$225 million to get train, pedestrian path ...](#)

Marin Independent Journal-Dec 17, 2014

The Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit agency needs another \$225 million to get commuter rail and a pedestrian pathway from Larkspur to Cloverdale, as promised to voters in 2008.

### [SMART gives go-ahead to large wetland restoration](#)

Santa Rosa Press Democrat-Dec 18, 2014

The agency tasked with building the North Bay's commuter rail line is about to embark on a \$1.9 million environmental restoration project that will create new wetlands, protect valuable habitat for endangered species and help the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit authority meet the conditions of its construction permits.

### [Striking Photos of the Transbay Transit Center As It Begins Its ...](#)

Curbed SF-Dec 17, 2014

Between Lumina, the Salesforce Tower, and the many other skyscrapers currently taking shape, construction barriers are a common sight around the Transbay District. At the heart of it all is the Pelli Clarke Pelli-designed Transbay Transit Center itself, heralded as the future Grand Central Station of the West. After years of dirt excavation and underground work, the transit center finally started to rise above ground just over a month ago, so we thought it was high time to check in and take a photo tour of the current construction scene.

### [New BART President Committed To Bringing Service To Silicon Valley](#)

Patch.com-Dec 19, 2014

Director Tom Blalock of Fremont was elected Thursday by his colleagues on the BART Board of Directors to serve as the board's president for the next year.

It's the third time that Blalock is serving as board chairman during his 20 years on the board.

Blalock said he is dedicated to expanding BART service further south and completing the Warm Springs extension in the southern part of Fremont is among the top priorities of his presidency.

### [BART's new airport link grounded by piece of plastic](#)

SFGate-Dec 18, 2014

It sure didn't take much to knock out BART's new, \$484 million rail line to Oakland International Airport — just a bit of plastic tarp and rope that landed on an electric rail during a recent storm.

The domino effect was enough to force the 3.2-mile line to shut down for most of Friday.

"It certainly is something that is going to need attention," said Joel Keller, president of BART's Board of Directors.

### [Caltrain bridge construction to begin this week: Nearly around-the ...](#)

San Mateo Daily Journal-Dec 16, 2014

Caltrain has set aside \$38 million to replace the bridges at Tilton, Monte Diablo, Santa Inez and Poplar avenues that no longer meet current seismic safety standards. It will also spend \$231 million toward upgrading its control system to increase safety and prepare for electrification by being able to run more trains on the tracks.

### [Caltrain Struggles to Meet Bike Parking Demand at 4th and King ...](#)

Streetsblog San Francisco (blog)-Dec 18, 2014

The Caltrain Bike Station parking facility outside its terminal at Fourth and King streets is set to be remodeled and slightly expanded to accommodate the growing number of Peninsula train commuters who are arriving by bike. But demand from bike-to-Caltrain commuters may continue to overwhelm the small, staffed bike station.

### [Driver Survives After GPS Leads Him In Front Of Speeding Caltrain ..](#)

CBS Local-Dec 18, 2014

Firefighters said the driver of the Toyota Prius had mistakenly made a turn onto the tracks on the direction of his GPS unit.

Firefighters said visibility at the time was compromised due to heavy rainfall and darkness.

Firefighters said the driver had realized his mistake but not before the car left the roadway and became stuck on the tracks.

### [Caltrain works to clear tracks after car stuck under train near Atherton](#)

SFGate-Dec 16, 2014

Caltrain was working to clear tracks in Atherton and San Jose where separate incidents involving trains and cars occurred Tuesday evening, a Caltrain spokeswoman said.



The new platforms for the relocated tracks at Sacramento opened this year. With them came complaints of the additional distance from the station to the platforms caused some people to miss their trains. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

## We Get Emails

### **Re: Rail Connections to California's Major Airports**

Enjoy reading your posts, but the most recent, "Rail Connections to California's Major Airports" completely missed Oakland. It also missed that a peplemover has just opened that runs from the terminal to the Coliseum BART station. Maybe an update is in order?

Michael Kiesling

### **Maybe you missed this, this is from my post**

**"Just recently Oakland Airport began service with a new People Mover built by BART to connect the terminals with the BART and Amtrak stations in Oakland by the Oakland Coliseum. This replaces a previous dedicated bus connection between the trains stations and the terminals. Ridership is already up on the People Mover compared with the bus connection. The People Movers is faster and runs more frequently than the bus." NB**

### Re: Congress and the Railroads

I heard on the news today that next year's committees have been decided. I hope you can find out more and let us know what to expect from the people Congress put in charge of restricting railroads.

I also hope it's not a replay of the ICC.

Claude Medearis

El Cajon, CA

**Here is a link to the [Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee of the Transportation Committee of the House of Representatives](#) .The two main players on this subcommittee are the Chair, Jeff Denham of California and Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania who is also the Chair of the Full Transportation Committee. Denham is a conservative farmer from the San Joaquin Valley. He is a vocal opponent of High Speed Rail, but supports Amtrak San Joaquin Service and the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) which both serve his districts. Shuster is a Republican from Pennsylvania who gets credit for being bi-partisan when it comes to transportation. Under Shuster the latest transportation bill had input from both sides of the aisle . He is also from an NEC state and supports rail and Amtrak.The big problem will be finding money for the many projects that have been put off for so many years. NB**

### Re: Amtrak Food Waste

I would like to share my thoughts about Amtrak's continuous food waste, despite their struggle with finances.

I just returned from a trip on The Sunset Limited, and - once again - noticed how Amtrak continues to waste food (in the dining car, during dinner service), by serving oversized quantities. I have addressed this issue before, however to no avail.

Specifically, one of their dinner menu items is "Herb-Roasted Half Chicken" - served on all long-distance routes. I am sure you agree, it is merely impossible to consume an entire (!) half-chicken by any human being. The most I have seen was consumed was only a quarter-chicken. However, since a half, or more, of this portion remains unfinished, the rest is sadly being discarded.

The hypocrisy of this issue is - on the one hand, Amtrak keeps complaining about financial losses caused by dining service. But on the other hand, Amtrak is the one who continues to waste food, serving oversized meals!

Perhaps RailPAC - having a strong influence on Amtrak and policies - could also address this issue?..

Specifically, Amtrak management needs to reduce the size of this Chicken dinner entry, from Half-chicken to Quarter-chicken. Doing so would not only be much more appropriate for a normal serving size, but would also substantially reduce overall food waste, while helping their finances.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Alexander Friedman,

**It is true that people in America eat too much when they eat away from home. But large portions increases sales which is why so many meals are super-sized. The food is the cheapest part of the meal. The overhead and labor costs are the main costs for food service. The big problem at Amtrak for its Food Service is the way costs are assigned on the Long Distance Trains by Amtrak. Much of this is arbitrarily assigned to trains based on route mileage and not the real costs of the trains. Much of the costs assigned to a train is based on Amtrak's overhead costs which have little to do with the long distance trains. 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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