U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

MAR 20 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Section 154 of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2009 (Pub. L. 111-8) requires the Federal Railroad Administrator to "submit a quarterly report on April 1, 2009, and quarterly reports thereafter, to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations detailing the Administrator's efforts at improving the on-time performance of Amtrak intercity rail service operating on non-Amtrak owned property. Such reports shall compare the most recent actual on-time performance data to pre-established on-time performance goals that the Administrator shall set for each rail service, identified by route. Such reports shall also include whatever other information and data regarding the on-time performance of Amtrak trains the Administrator deems to be appropriate."

I am pleased to submit the report that is due on April 1, 2009 in accordance with this requirement. I hope that the information contained in the enclosed report will assist the Committee in its work.

Identical letters have been sent to the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, and to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations.

Sincerely,

Jo Strang
Acting Deputy Administrator

Enclosures

April 1, 2009

April 2009 Report on Amtrak On-Time Performance
Submitted by the Federal Railroad Acting Deputy Administrator
Under Section 154 of Pub. L. 111-8

This report includes two sections: (1) an update on recent Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) efforts to catalyze improvements in Amtrak's on-time performance (OTP); and (2) in keeping with the FRA's January 1, 2009 OTP report, an update on Amtrak OTP results and performance against FRA-established goals.

(1) Recent OTP Improvement Actions

Southeast Corridor. Amtrak continues to benefit from reductions in freight train interference and slow orders as a result of the Southeast (I-95) Corridor Performance Improvement Plan, which the FRA required of Amtrak management as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 Grant Agreement between the FRA and Amtrak. For example, in December 2008, freight train interference and slow order delays each decreased by more than 30 percent year-over-year on this corridor. These delay reductions correlate with OTP improvements that Amtrak's Southeast Corridor trains have experienced in FY 2009 through January. During this period, the *Auto Train's* endpoint OTP was 90.4 percent, one of the highest in the Amtrak System, while the *Carolinian*, *Palmetto*, *Silver Star*, and *Silver Meteor* have all had year-over-year double digit percentage point increases in OTP. Most notably, the fiscal year-to-date OTP for the *Silver Meteor's* long distance service was 82.9 percent through January 2009, which was better than that for a majority of Amtrak's corridor trains.

California Zephyr. The Union Pacific Railroad (UP) and Amtrak continue to implement their 2007 agreement to reduce delays on UP's portion of the *California Zephyr*, which extends from Denver, Colorado to Emeryville, California. As part of the agreement, Amtrak temporarily added time to the *Zephyr's* schedule to account for track improvement work that the UP is performing. As track work is completed, Amtrak is gradually removing the added time from the schedule, as demonstrated in the Fall 2008-Winter 2009 published timetable, which removed over an hour from the *Zephyr's* schedule. While the Union Pacific continues to make progress in reducing slow orders on the *Zephyr's* route, Amtrak and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway are also implementing a performance improvement plan (initiated at the insistence of the U.S. Department of Transportation/FRA) for the BNSF's portion of the route between Chicago, Illinois and Denver, Colorado.

Other Recent OTP Developments. Increased Federal interest in Amtrak's OTP—as reflected in the FY 2009 Appropriations Act, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, and intensified U.S. Department of Transportation/FRA involvement as detailed in prior reports of this series—has led to significant reductions in freight train interference on certain host railroads. During the first quarter of FY 2009, freight train interference delays per train-mile were down approximately 50 percent year-over-year on both the Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific railroads. Amtrak attributes these substantial improvements primarily to management actions at each of these host railroads. As a result, a number of Amtrak routes on these host railroads have had notable year-over-year improvements in on-time performance. These include the *Capitols*, *Texas Eagle*, and *Sunset Limited* on the Union Pacific as well as the

Pennsylvanian and *Crescent* on Norfolk Southern. The *Pennsylvanian* and the *Capitols* have the best endpoint OTP (95.9 and 93.1 percent respectively for the fiscal year-to-date through January 2009) in the Amtrak system, while the *Crescent* has the second best endpoint OTP among the long distance trains (83.3 percent for the fiscal year-to-date). The *Sunset Limited* and *Texas Eagle*, which historically have been among Amtrak's least on time trains, have had year-over-year OTP increases of 54.3 and 24.4 percentage points respectively through January FY 2009.

(2) Goals and Route Performance

Attachment A contains updated OTP statistics for all Amtrak routes for the fiscal year-to-date through January 2009. As the attachment illustrates, just over half the routes (23) have had improvements in OTP (in terms of both improved percent on time and no decrease in effective speed) through January FY 2009. Of those routes experiencing OTP improvement, a total of 13 (five corridor-type and eight long-distance trains) are meeting or are surpassing their FRA-defined OTP target for FY 2009.

For FY 2009, the percent on time across the entire Amtrak system through January was 76.1 percent, an increase of 3.5 percentage points over the previous year. Although the Northeast Corridor has experienced a small decline in endpoint OTP through January 2009, Amtrak's other corridor routes have experienced a four percentage-point increase year-over-year (for an average endpoint OTP of 76.3 percent) while the long distance trains have experienced a nine-point increase during the same period (for an average endpoint OTP of 69 percent). Further highlighting these OTP improvements, over a third of Amtrak's routes have experienced an improvement in endpoint OTP of ten percentage points or greater through January 2009.

Attachment A

Amtrak On-Time Performance: FY 2009

Year-to-Date Totals through January

	✓ Indicates both tests were met for OTP Progress	Test 1: Higher Percent On Time YTD - Jan. 2009 vs. YTD - Jan. 2008				Test 2: Constant or Better Effective Speed
		FY09 % On Time	% Change from FY08	Proposed Target for FY09	% Variance from FY09 Target	Change in MPH from October 2007 Baseline
Northeast Corridor Service (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 95%)						
Acela		84.0%	(0.8%)	90.7%	(6.7%)	(2.1)
Regional Service		75.8%	(1.4%)	84.8%	(9.0%)	(3.7)
Other Corridor Services (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 90%. Minimum target proposed for FY 2009: 75%)						
Adirondack	✓	59.3%	20.7%	75.0%	(15.7%)	1.5
Blue Water	✓	39.7%	11.2%	75.0%	(35.3%)	0.6
Capitols	✓	93.1%	7.6%	80.8%	12.3%	1.5
Carolinian	✓	65.6%	18.4%	75.0%	(9.4%)	2.8
Cascades	✓	67.8%	3.0%	75.0%	(7.2%)	0.1
Downeaster		57.4%	(9.5%)	82.8%	(25.4%)	(2.1)
Empire Service		78.8%	9.0%	79.0%	(0.3%)	(1.8)
Ethan Allen Express		56.7%	34.7%	75.0%	(18.3%)	(4.5)
Heartland Flyer	✓	70.7%	11.8%	75.0%	(4.3%)	4.2
Hiawatha		82.0%	(4.4%)	89.5%	(7.5%)	(2.0)
Hoosier State		35.8%	(4.9%)	75.0%	(39.2%)	(0.6)
Illini		62.2%	6.7%	77.4%	(15.1%)	(1.4)
Illinois Zephyr	✓	78.2%	3.8%	75.1%	3.1%	0.4
Keystone		87.0%	(0.1%)	87.2%	(0.2%)	0.2
Lincoln Service	✓	60.0%	1.6%	75.0%	(15.0%)	0.6
Maple Leaf	✓	50.4%	9.3%	75.0%	(24.6%)	0.7
Missouri Services	✓	46.6%	31.9%	75.0%	(28.4%)	2.2
Pacific Surfliner	✓	81.7%	0.8%	80.9%	0.8%	0.2
Pennsylvanian	✓	95.9%	7.3%	78.9%	17.0%	1.3
Pere Marquette		28.9%	4.1%	75.0%	(46.1%)	(0.5)
Piedmont		76.8%	(3.2%)	80.6%	(3.8%)	(1.1)
San Joaquins	✓	87.3%	1.6%	76.8%	10.6%	1.8
Vermonter		86.6%	42.7%	75.0%	11.6%	(0.6)
Wolverines		34.8%	3.4%	75.0%	(40.2%)	(0.5)
Long Distance Trains (Goal proposed for FY 2012: 85%. Minimum target proposed for FY 2009: 66%)						
Auto Train	✓	90.4%	1.4%	71.3%	19.1%	1.6
California Zephyr		43.9%	(2.8%)	66.3%	(22.4%)	4.5
Capitol Limited	✓	53.3%	8.5%	66.3%	(13.0%)	2.7
Cardinal		34.9%	(4.1%)	66.3%	(31.3%)	(1.0)
City of New Orleans		77.0%	(7.6%)	85.0%	(8.0%)	(0.4)
Coast Starlight	✓	71.4%	21.2%	66.3%	5.2%	1.3
Crescent	✓	83.3%	9.3%	66.3%	17.1%	1.2
Empire Builder		64.9%	(5.5%)	78.0%	(13.2%)	(1.3)
Lake Shore Limited	✓	67.9%	14.9%	66.3%	1.7%	2.9
Palmetto	✓	71.9%	14.2%	66.3%	5.7%	4.1
Silver Meteor	✓	82.9%	12.7%	66.3%	16.6%	2.3
Silver Star	✓	71.5%	26.8%	66.3%	5.3%	1.3
Southwest Chief		80.9%	(0.8%)	70.1%	10.8%	0.3
Sunset Limited	✓	71.4%	54.3%	66.3%	5.2%	2.6
Texas Eagle	✓	56.5%	24.4%	66.3%	(9.7%)	1.0