

Amtrak always gets funded just enough not to do things right. If Congress is trying to make passenger rail look bad and the 1950s mess we now endure look less like a dinosaur, they're succeeding.

Please vote for the full FY2005 funding package requested by Amtrak President David Gunn. If the money is wasted (it probably won't be under Gunn's tenure), there are civil and criminal procedures in place to rectify the situation and punish proven wrongdoing, with a few recent notable exceptions — but that's another letter.

Cost and taxation in transportation, as in all businesses, are meaningless concepts except in the context of investment and return. In other words: What do we get for our money? Every study we know about and probably plenty we don't prove that passenger rail is one of the best public investments available.

The present Amtrak administration has shown good faith and progress toward clearing up past mismanagement and executive featherbedding. In the name of what's both progressive and conservative in America, give them what they need! Your choice is pretty clear - almost \$1 billion to shut down the system vs. \$2 billion to begin to untie that other hand from behind the back of passenger rail.

Local and regional leaders all over the U.S. have come to realize the rail transportation in their areas is almost a magic bullet, i.e., an important part of solving a vast number of social, environmental and financial problems.

We urge you to put yourself on the right side of future history by rebalancing our national transportation system. Auto and air are not enough. Rail is a true bargain.

J.W. Madison  
Rails, Inc.

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