

Senator Tammy Baldwin
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Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Ron Johnson
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Washington, D.C. 20510

30 West Mifflin St. Suite 700
Madison, WI. 53703

5315 Wall St. Suite 110
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Dear Senators,

Once again Amtrak is planning on reducing the Empire Builder train to three days per week. This change would apply to ALL Long-Distance trains except the Auto Train. I am writing you to express my frustration with this reduction in service.

If the reduction in service to three trains per week is not stopped, it will take effect on Thursday, October 1, 2020. For many of the voices that have been saying Amtrak wants to reduce or eliminate the Long-Distance service, the first part of that move is drawing near.

For towns and cities, communities, and counties, and all the rural traveling citizens along the Empire Builder route and throughout Wisconsin, this change would mean:

- A reduction in service is just that, simply said. Fewer trains, fewer opportunities. The motto for the State of Wisconsin is FORWARD. This does not represent that.
- The communities that host an Empire Builder station stop will see a reduction in everything related to the train traveling public. Money spent on lodging, dining, recreation, shopping, and other services will drop more than half. What will the impact be on the local employment economy? I doubt there will be a congressional relief bill to make up for this lost money.
- Using the Amtrak Sunset Limited and Cardinal as examples, two trains that were operating three times per week prior to the COVID outbreak, both trains reported demand was slowly trending downward. Many critics believe this is the ultimate goal of Amtrak; to eliminate all Long-Distance service.

Amtrak has released details of when the Empire Builder would return to daily service, but it is very open-ended and does not convey confidence of an eventual return to daily service.

The return of riders to the Empire Builder will be a silent movement of comfortable and confident users looking for a traditional mode of public transportation. If Amtrak continues to provide daily trains the return of the travelling public will likely be sooner than later. If Amtrak moves to three trains per week, the timing and decision making of when to return to daily service will probably add to consumer confusion and disillusionment of the service, continuing the overall decline of the Long-Distance trains.

I sincerely hope you will work on a plan that continues daily service for the Amtrak Empire Builder for the foreseeable future.

Please sign your name with your full address.