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Dear Senators,

I am writing to you today expressing my concern over Amtrak reducing the Empire Builder train to three days per week in October. I am also frustrated with this reduction in service most likely hurting our rural areas the most that do not have the intercity travel options like the large urban areas do.

- The economic benefits for the rural towns the Empire Builder stops at is well documented. COVID-19 created the first drop in this benefit earlier this year. Just when it seemed ridership was growing, reducing the Builder to three times per week will create an additional blow for some of our residents and businesses.
- Since all Long-Distance trains will have service reductions, connections to other Amtrak trains might become difficult with an overnight layover. This is not the kind of service that will lure passengers and generate return customers. With Amtrak's metrics for returning Long Distance trains to daily service seemingly difficult to achieve, will we ever see daily service on the Empire Builder again? A reduction in service is simply said, fewer trains and fewer opportunities.
- 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 goal of Amtrak; to eliminate all Long-Distance 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. Which side of this issue are you on?

I sincerely hope you will work on a plan that returns daily service for the Amtrak Empire Builder by Spring 2021.

Please sign your name with your full address.



Please use the letter on the opposite side as talking points for calling Senators Baldwin and Johnson. OR with your name and address included, mail to our Senators in Washington D.C.

OR send an e-mail to Senators Baldwin & Johnson. Use some of the points on the letter with a bullet point or two. You may want to include your own Points of Emphasis. The e-mail forms for each senator are below:

<https://www.baldwin.senate.gov/feedback>

<https://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email-the-senator>



When the Senate works on a Fiscal Year 2021 budget, please ask our Senators to consider funding Amtrak at a level that assures the Empire Builder will return to daily service. Wisconsin deserves nothing less.

Railroad Passengers Association (RailPassengers.org) has documented how the Amtrak Cardinal and Sunset service have disproportionately turned away passenger rail users because of the three trains per week. Some of the reasons cited are confusion over which days the train operates, what are passenger connection choices to other Amtrak trains, and greater problems associated with a late train if any kind of intermodal connection is missed. If the train only operates every other or every third day, there are simply fewer opportunities to ride the train.

Thank you for taking the time to contact your U.S. Senators.

Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers

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