

Ronald Batory
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 NEW JERSEY AVENUE, SE
WASHINGTON, DC 20590
202-366-4000

Re: Metrics and Minimum Standards for Intercity Passenger Rail Service (Docket ID: FRA-2019-0069)

Dear Administrator Batory:

My name is Joseph Jakuta and I live in the Washington, DC Area. I am a regular rider of Amtrak, mostly in the Northeastern United States for both work and business trips. I am also a dues paying member of the Rail Passengers Association (formally NARP). I am providing comments on the proposed rule “Metrics and Minimum Standards for Intercity Passenger Rail Service” (85 FR 17835, March 31, 2020).

Firstly, I support FRA's proposed Customer On-Time Performance (Customer OTP) standard because it is passenger-focused, unambiguous, straightforward and easy to understand. Having ridden many Amtrak lines over the years including the Carolinian, the Cascades, the Empire Builder, and the Palmetto, I am certain that travelers need to be able to understand the metrics that Amtrak is relying on to make good travel decisions and the complicated metrics that often get used in transportation planning do not do that. I am glad that these metrics being proposed, by contrast, are simple and passenger focused.

I also encourage FRA to consider the enhancements the Rail Passengers Association proposed in its formal comments on the rule on April 22. These enhancements include RPA-suggested metrics that evaluate the customer experience without relying on surveys, that incorporate concerns of minority, elderly, and disabled travelers, and that broaden and strengthen the assessment of public benefits from each route.

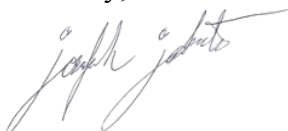
I am encouraged of the inclusion of the following in the rulemaking:

(b) Missed connections. The missed connections metric is the percent of passengers connecting to/from other Amtrak routes who missed connections due to a late arrival from another Amtrak train, reported by route and updated on an annual basis.

My business travel has taken me from Washington, DC to Saratoga Springs, NY, Albany, NY, Harrisburg, PA, and Hartford, CT. While traveling to destinations like Trenton, NJ or Wilmington, DE that are solely on the Northeast Corridor are fine, if there are delays, the Adirondack, the Ethan Allen, the Keystone, and the Hartford Line are not scheduled regularly enough. Missing connections to these destinations can create huge problems for business travel. Acknowledging this in the performance standards is imperative and this metric must be both evaluated and train service improved upon.

This summer my family was planning our first trip from New Orleans on the Crescent with stops in Atlanta and Greenville, SC. Unfortunately, the trip was canceled due to Covid-19, but I do hope that when we reschedule this trip for when it is safer to travel that metrics will be in place to ensure that our family can experience a smooth trip that has been improved upon using the metrics proposed in this rulemaking.

Sincerely,



Joseph Jakuta
Mount Rainier, MD