



Photo Credit: Dave Highfield



FRIDAY HOTLINE

#1435

APRIL 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2026



## Association News

### Rail Passengers Oppose White House Call to Cut Rail and Transit

The Rail Passengers Association today expressed deep concern over the [Trump Administration's Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2027 Presidential Budget Request](#), released today, which proposes a major increase in military spending offset by significant cuts to domestic programs—including steep reductions to public transportation and intercity passenger rail.

While the budget request includes \$26.6 billion in discretionary budget authority for the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)—a \$1.6 billion (6.2%) increase over FY2026 enacted levels—the bulk of new funding is directed to highways and aviation. Transit and intercity passenger rail programs would see meaningful reductions.

“At a time of record highs for gas prices and airfare, the Trump Administration is proposing cuts to the intercity rail and transit programs that have been helping Americans stay connected to work, to school, and to family,” said Jim Mathews, President & CEO of the Rail Passengers Association. “This budget moves the nation in the wrong direction for affordability, mobility, and safety.”

#### Key Budgetary Impacts on Rail and Transit

Under the President's FY2027 request:

- Amtrak funding drops to \$2.1 billion—down from \$2.427 billion in FY2026, a 13.5% decrease
  - Amtrak National Network: \$1.45 billion (down from \$1.577 billion)
  - Amtrak Northeast Corridor (NEC): \$650 million (down from \$850 million)
- Funding to the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Program is eliminated, reduced to \$0 from \$65 million in FY2026 discretionary funding, despite strong bipartisan support and national demand.
- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) funding is nearly doubled to \$300 million, up from \$137 million in FY2026 (a figure which included earmarks)
- The Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program is cut nearly in half, from \$2.45 billion in FY2026 to \$1.25 billion in FY2027

#### A Looming Investment Cliff

The proposed cuts become even more severe when factoring in the expiration of Advance Appropriations under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) at the end of FY2026. Including those expiring funds, the budget would result in the following year-over-year drops:

- Amtrak National Network: \$4.8 billion → \$1.45 billion
- Amtrak NEC: \$2.0 billion → \$600 million
- High-Speed Rail Grants: \$900 million → \$0
- Federal-State Partnership (total): \$3.8 billion → \$1.4 billion

“These reductions represent a dramatic step backward just as states and regions are delivering new service, modernizing aging infrastructure, and responding to unprecedented demand for rail,” Mathews said. “Slashing funding to proven grant programs pulls the rug out from projects already underway.”

#### Rail Program Summary (Discretionary)

(Millions of dollars)		
Programs	FY26 Enacted	FY27 Presidential Request
Amtrak - NEC	\$850	\$650
Amtrak - Nat'l Network	\$1,577	\$1,450
FRA Operations	\$265	\$271
Fed-State Partnership for IPR	\$65	\$0
CRISI	\$137	\$300
RR Crossing Elimination	\$0	\$0
Restoration & Enhancement	\$0	\$0
	<b>\$2,894</b>	<b>\$2,671</b>

### Take Action

*Rail Passengers* is urging Congress to reject cuts to passenger rail and public transportation and to fully fund programs that deliver affordable, energy efficient, and reliable mobility for communities nationwide.

"Congress has repeatedly recognized the value of passenger rail to economic growth, safety, and energy independence," Mathews said. "We call on lawmakers to continue that bipartisan commitment and ensure Americans don't lose vital transportation options."

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN

## The Foxboro Fares Kerfuffle Fits U.S. Realities To A 'T'

by Jim Mathews / President & CEO

So, in just 69 days the biggest, splashiest sports tournament on the planet will take place in the U.S., [drawing about six million attendees to 16 World Cup host cities](#), and it's ostensibly an opportunity to show the world our very best.

But the Athletic last week broke the story that the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority -- which we all know and love as simply "The T" -- intends to [charge World Cup "soccer" fans \\$75 to take a roundtrip train to Gillette Stadium in Foxborough](#) to watch Haiti take on Scotland in the first match of Group C on a warm June Saturday night.

("Soccer" appears in quotes because for the remainder of this commentary I'll be using the **correct** word to describe the beautiful game, which is "football.")

For context, if you wanted to take a one-way journey between Foxboro and Boston's South Street station right now, [it's a four-zone ride priced at \\$8.75](#). MBTA routinely charges a premium for special-event express trains between South Street and Foxboro, generally around \$20. And for last week's friendly between Brazil and France -- two football superpowers if there ever were any -- 2,300 fans paid \$30 for a standing-room-only ride.

But \$75?

MBTA is quite transparent about why they're doing that.

"The MBTA has taken on a \$35 million project to upgrade Foxboro Station in advance of this World Cup, including making it fully accessible," the agency said in a statement. "The T plans to run an unprecedented amount of service for the World Cup, mobilizing up to 20,000 riders to and from each match, and we're excited to serve the global community of soccer fans coming to Massachusetts."

Gotta pay those bills.

READ MORE

As a member of the Rail Passengers Association, you have more than just a seat on the train - you have a seat at the table. With 2026 shaping up to be another landmark year for passenger rail, there's never been a better time to help steer our organization's future.

We are now accepting nominations for dedicated members to step into leadership roles. If you're ready to advocate for the future of rail, we invite you to submit a **Candidate Information Statement (CIS)** for the following positions:

- **[Board of Directors](#)**: Serve as an Officer or Director to manage the Association's high-level strategy.
- **[Council of Representatives \(At-Large\)](#)**: Join our nationwide body of volunteer advocates.
- **[Membership Action Review Committee \(MARC\)](#)**: Help oversee internal member processes.

**CLICK ON THE ABOVE LINKS TO BE TAKEN TO THE CIS FORM FOR THAT POSITION**

**NOTICE:** General membership is allowed to run for Board Director and the At-Large Council seats. You must be a sitting member of the Board or Council to apply for Board Officer. MARC members must be a member of the Council.

**THE DEADLINE TO FILE A CIS FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTION IS MIDNIGHT EASTERN ON MONDAY, APRIL 6TH**

The elections will take place during our **Spring Council Business Meeting on April 22nd**. Candidates will have the opportunity to introduce themselves and give a brief presentation before the vote.

Ten At-Large Council Representative seats, carrying two-year terms, and five MARC positions, carrying one-year terms, will be determined by in-person voting during the meeting. The nine Board Director and Officer positions - serving three-year and two-year terms, respectively - will be decided via an online ballot following the close of the business session.

- [Learn about the Council of Representatives](#)
- [Learn about the Board of Directors](#)
- [Review the Association's Governing Documents](#)

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## Field Notes

### A Small Fix with Big Implications for Long-Distance Passenger Rail

As the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program moves from planning into implementation, an important question has come into focus: how do long-distance passenger rail corridors compete on equal footing within a framework designed primarily for shorter, state-supported routes?

S. 3728, the Long-Distance Corridor Relief Enhancement Act, offers a targeted answer.

The bill does not change the structure of the Corridor ID program, nor does it guarantee funding or advancement for any corridor. Instead, it addresses a specific challenge facing long-distance routes during the early planning and development phases.

Unlike shorter corridors that are often led by a single state or compact geography, long-distance routes typically span multiple states, regions, and partners. In these cases, requiring a non-federal funding match during early-stage planning can create a barrier that has little to do with project readiness or merit, and more to do with the complexity of assembling multi-state financial commitments before the work has fully taken shape.

S. 3728 would allow long-distance corridors to advance through the planning and development phases of Corridor ID without a non-federal match requirement, while maintaining all existing requirements for later stages. In doing so, it preserves the integrity of the program while recognizing the structural differences between corridor types.

For members and advocates, this is a reminder that some of the most important policy changes are not sweeping reforms, but targeted adjustments that help existing programs work as intended across a broader range of projects.

As Corridor ID evolves, ensuring long-distance routes remain viable candidates for development will be essential to maintaining a truly national passenger rail network.

For additional background: <https://bigskyrailmt.gov/take-action>

Please email [Joe Aiello](mailto:Joe.Aiello@narp.org) if you have any local, state or regional stories/projects (even something you know or experienced happening overseas) that you would like to write about and see highlighted in the Hotline.

### Calling All Readers!

Do you have a favorite transit/train photo (or photos) you have taken from your travels around the country, or even around the world? Would you like to see them featured in our Hotline social media post each week (with credit, of course)?

Send them to us @ [hotline@narp.org](mailto:hotline@narp.org) with the subject "HOTLINE PHOTO"

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## Hotline Links

*A curated selection of passenger rail and transportation stories from this week. Check out our social media feeds to read breaking news and join the conversation!*

['The numbers say New York': Passenger rail group advocates for sharpening focus](#), WFMZ-TV

All Aboard Lehigh Valley President, and Association Council Member, Brett Webber successfully secured \$30,000 from the Northampton County Council to help support an economic impact/ridership study for the Allentown-NYC corridor.

[America's horrible trains mean you have no alternative to hourslong airport lines](#), Gothamist

*"Every time we have crises like this, and they do pop up from time to time, inevitably people flow to Amtrak. We just, basically, don't have the resiliency to absorb the extra travelers."* - Rail Passengers President & CEO Jim Mathews

[More than 100 house members appeal for full funding for Amtrak, other rail programs](#), Trains Pro

More than a quarter of the House of Representatives is asking the Chair & Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development to continue the level of funding under the IJA for rail programs in FY27

[Trains now running along Monon Corridor; South Shore Line dedicates route between severe storms](#), Chicago Tribune

It's like rain on your openin' day...

[Amtrak, Union Pacific announce agreement regarding Sunset Limited route](#), Trains Pro

An issue that arose during the STB's investigation into UP's on-time performance treatment of the Sunset Limited has been settled allowing Amtrak to use a 5-mile stretch of track near Avondale, LA.

[Amtrak Pacific Surfliner offers deal for 2026 FIFA World Cup in LA](#), NBC Los Angeles

Amtrak is teaming up with the Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board to offer a 20% discount on fares this summer aimed at making easier for football fans to experience the World Cup in LA

[Amtrak passengers take part in Africatown Freedom Tours](#), Fox 10

We have heard many stories from people who are so grateful to have train service back on the Gulf Coast, and the ability to travel and tour important history is one of those.

[\[Video\] NYC's Worst Rail Bottleneck Is Finally Fixed](#), Lonestar Trip Reports

A look at the opening of NYC's new Portal North Bridge and what's still to come.

[DC Streetcar to make final stop after serving community for decade](#), DC News Now

Plagued by lack of funding, political proponents, zero expansion, and too many double-parked cars slowing down service - the fare-free orphan of the

[Why the Arizona Legislature doesn't fund public transportation](#), ABC 15

The deck is stacked against public transportation advocates in the Grand Canyon State



**WE ARE WORKING ON A DISCORD SERVER.  
STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION**

If you aren't following Rail Passengers on social media, you should be!  
We are covering all the breaking news America's passengers need to stay informed on local, regional, and national issues.

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## Upcoming Events

### Advocacy Workshops + Council Business Meeting



[DC ADVOCACY WORKSHOPS REGISTRATION](#)

**Registration is \$125.00**

Due to the space limitations of our office, each of the sessions is **limited to 20 tickets** and there will be no on-site or virtual registration. Please attend the session for the state you reside in. **Registration ends at Midnight eastern on Friday, April 10th.**

**NOTE: THE NORTHEAST/SOUTH AND MIDWEST/MID-ATLANTIC WORKSHOPS ARE NOW FULL.**

The in-office workshops will run from 8:00a to 4:00p. Lunch will be provided (*attendees are responsible for their own breakfast*). Attendees will be responsible for securing their own lodging needs.

Stay tuned to [www.railpassengers.org/dc2026](http://www.railpassengers.org/dc2026) for more information.



[2026 SPRING COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING REGISTRATION](#)

**In-person registration is \$99  
Virtual registration is free**

The 2026 Spring Council Business Meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 22nd from 8:00a to 4:00p. Lunch will be provided (*attendees are*

responsibly for their own breakfast). Registration ends on Friday, April 10th at Midnight eastern. There will be no on-site registration.

Stay tuned to [www.railpassengers.org/2026SpringCouncilMeeting](http://www.railpassengers.org/2026SpringCouncilMeeting) for more information.

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## Local Meetings + Events

[The Ohio Rail Summit](#), Saturday, April 18

[22nd Annual Southwestern Rail Conference](#), May 18-19

[Greater Northwest Rail Summit](#), August 25-27

Please contact Joe Aiello ([jaiello@narprail.org](mailto:jaiello@narprail.org)) to have a local, state or regional meeting added to the Rail Passengers calendar (print and on-line) of upcoming events!

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## Staff Updates

Your staff is at the table, in the field, having the conversations that make a difference for passengers across the country. Learn what they're up to each week and how you can support your Association's key missions!

- **Jim Mathews, President & CEO**, traveled to Toledo to continue prep for this fall's RailNation: Toledo event, having back-to-back-to-back meetings with partners who are going to help us make this gathering the best yet. He also continued to monitor developments in the UP-NS merger proceeding, responded to queries from congressional staff, did a few press interviews, and sighed loudly as the U.S. Men's National Team took two pre-World Cup beatings at the hands of Belgium (5-2) and Portugal (2-0).
- **Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President of Policy**, has been busy working with Rail Passengers members and stakeholders to prepare for April's Passenger Rail week of advocacy in Washington, D.C. You can [register for our series of preparatory webinars](#) to find out how to get involved.
- **Jonsie Stone, Chief of Staff**, spent the majority of the week in Toledo, Ohio with Jim Mathews conducting site visits and meeting with local partners to prepare for RailNation. She also processed membership dues and donations.
- **Joe Aiello, Director of Community Engagement & Organizing**, backed up Sean for a Day on the Hill prep briefing on Monday, spoke with a number of advocates as they make their arrangements to join us in DC at the end of the month, and remotely staffed Jim and Jonsie as they made their follow-up trip to Toledo this week. *(He is also lamenting the USMNT losses this week)*
- **Kimberly Notarianni, Membership Management Consultant**, continues to support constituents with new memberships, renewals, password resets, and ensuring the membership portal runs smoothly. If you need a password reset but are unsure of your username, please use the email address you originally signed up with. To access your account, use only this link: <https://membership.railpassengers.org/usercenter> If you receive an error indicating you cannot be verified or your payment cannot be processed, you may have logged into an older NEON account (for members who joined prior to February 18, 2025 and have not yet transitioned to CharityEngine). If issues persist, please contact Kimberly at [KNotarianni@narprail.org](mailto:KNotarianni@narprail.org)

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## Apply for Volunteer Staff at Rail Passengers Association

**VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED**



[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE!](#)

## Membership How-To

Are you a current member and need help with your account number, username, etc.?

[Click Here For Our Membership "How-To" Page](#)

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**NOTICE: Looking for your 2025 membership/donation tax documents?**

[Click here](#) for instructions.

## We Have Merch!

New items available!



 [Tell Us Your Story](#)

 [Visit our Store](#)

 [Discuss This Week's Hotline](#)

 [Service Updates & Timetables](#)

 [Visit the General Membership Group](#)

 [View Webinars](#)

 [Rail Passengers' Social Media](#)

 [Take Action](#)

# Rail Passengers Timetables



Our Timetables Manager, Chris Jukins, has created a spring update for us. He is still working on a few stragglers, but we should have those up soon.

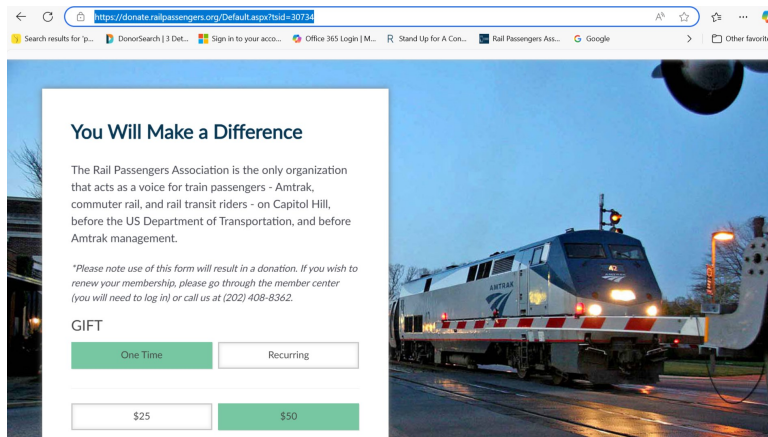
[CLICK HERE](#)

NOTE: Because we do update the links on our website - please bookmark **the main page** and not the individual schedules

## Donate Online with Confidence

You can donate to the Rail Passengers Association online with confidence, knowing your credit card information is secure. Charity Engine uses industry-standard SSL technology to keep your information secure. Don't wait for a paper appeal to donate, support the Association today by donating here. When the web browser shows a lock next to the URL, it means that it's an HTTPS, and it's secure:

<https://donate.railpassengers.org/Default.aspx?tsid=30734>



LOOKING FOR SMARTER  
WAYS TO DONATE?



MAKING A CONTRIBUTION  
HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER!

Do more with your donations. If you have questions about employer match, gifting a membership, or other questions about how to make a bigger impact, let us know! Your staff is here to help with:

- Online Donations
- Donor Advised Funds

- Employer Match
- RPA Signature Visa Card
- Gift of Membership
- and More!

With multiple secure, protected methods of payment, you have more flexibility in the way dues are paid. Skip the hassle and [contact us](#) today for help setting up automatic or online payments.

- Setup ACH or E-Check with your bank of choice
- Use a Debit or Credit Card to pay online, or
- Send a check to 1200 G Street NW Suite 520 Washington, DC 20005

### Use Your Donor Advised Fund (DAF) to Donate, Renew or Join Online

You can now donate or join/renew your membership, online, through your donor advised fund using DAFpay. All Rail Passengers forms now include a "Donor Advised Fund" button under Payment.

Donation Form:

The screenshot shows a donation form with the following fields and options:

- Phone Number (not required) input field.
- Email Address input field with a red asterisk indicating it is required.
- Checkbox:  Yes, I would like to receive email communications.
- PAYMENT** section with buttons for: Credit Card, Bank Account, PayPal, Donor Advised Fund (highlighted in green), and Google Pay.
- A dark blue button labeled "DAF pay | Donor Advised Fund".
- Checkbox:  Dedicate this donation?

The background of the form is a photograph of an Amtrak train at night.

Membership Form:

The screenshot shows a membership form with the following fields and options:

- Checkbox:  Rail Passengers' Webinar Series
- Checkbox:  Other
- Checkbox:  Yes, I prefer communication by email rather than by mail.
- PAYMENT** section with buttons for: Credit Card, Bank Account, Donor Advised Fund (highlighted in black), and Google Pay.
- CAPTCHA** section with a checkbox:  I'm not a robot.
- A dark blue button labeled "DAF pay | Donor Advised Fund".

After selecting Donor Advised Fund as your payment preference, you will be taken to a DAFpay screen to select your donor advised fund provider, ie., Fidelity Charitable, Vanguard Charitable, Daffy, etc.

The screenshot shows the DAFpay provider selection screen with the following elements:

- Header: DAFpay™
- Section: Select your provider
- Text: Express checkout with your Donor Advised Fund
- Search bar: Search for thousands of providers
- List of providers:
  - Fidelity Charitable
  - Schwab Charitable
  - Vanguard Charitable
  - The Donors Fund
- Link: [What is a Donor Advised Fund?](#)
- Footnote: Names & logos are shown to identify your provider & do not indicate endorsement or sponsorship.

Select your provider, then follow their prompts. If you need to provide information on Rail Passengers Association, please use the below:

National Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc.

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## Member & Donor Notices

- **The Rail Passengers Association is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Our federal tax identification number is 36-2615221**
- **To help facilitate dissemination of electronic thank you receipts,** please make sure your contact information, **specifically your email address,** is up-to-date in your Neon profile.
- **If you need assistance with your membership,** please call the Office at 202-408-8362.
- **While our staff continues to work remotely, we are unable to provide permanent membership cards.** You can print a temporary membership card by creating an account at [www.railpassengers.org](http://www.railpassengers.org) (select "My Account" on the homepage).
- **Complete all information!** -- Before sealing your envelope, PLEASE double-check the credit card information on the buck slip.
  - Print credit card information clearly.
  - **Include an expiration date, month and year, as well as the CVV number.**
  - Without **COMPLETE** information, your membership renewal or donation can't be processed.
- **If you have your financial institution send a check on your behalf,** without a buckslip, PLEASE instruct them to add:
  - a notation in the memo field if the payment is for membership dues or a donation, AND,
  - your Rail Passengers Association member ID. If we have multiple members with the same name, i.e., John Smith, it can be hard to identify the correct member to attribute the payment, without the member ID.



Rail Passengers Association members have access to a full service, nationwide federal credit union with extensive product and service offerings. Signature FCU is the exclusive provider of the [Rail Passengers Association-branded Visa credit card](#) with our logo, which supports our work by giving back to our organization, and gives you 1 point for every \$1 you spend to redeem for travel and merchandise. The card has no annual fee, no balance transfer fees, no foreign transaction fees, and has a very low interest rate.



Rail Passengers Association Earns Coveted 4-Star Rating from Charity Navigator

Rail Passengers Association's strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. Our Charity Navigator profile can be found by clicking [here](#).

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## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:



If you have questions, feedback, or submissions for next week's hotline, send us your thoughts! Help us spread the word about your local, regional, and national passenger rail wins.



**RAIL PASSENGERS**

EST. 1967

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