

May 1, 2017

Charles Moorman IV, CEO
National Railroad Passenger Corporation
60 Massachusetts Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20002

Via e-mail and USPS

Dear Mr. Moorman:

This is written to propose alternative *Coast Starlight* service in the Pacific Northwest, in light of its extended suspension north of Sacramento following last week's accident in northern California. AORTA believes that any alternative, however incomplete, is preferable to abandoning communities most reliant on Amtrak and undercutting arguments for a national network. Specifically, AORTA urges:

- Bus bridge serving stations between Sacramento and Klamath Falls, with stub rail service continuing to/from those points. If daily bus service is not feasible this time of year due to charter demands, then at least tri-weekly or even bi-weekly service; **OR**
- Rerouting the *Starlight* via alternative rail routing –tri-weekly or bi-weekly if daily service is not feasible.

AORTA recognizes that timing and geography provide Amtrak only with bad options. However, AORTA is deeply concerned that by abandoning Chemult/Bend, Klamath Falls, Dunsmuir, Redding, Red Bluff and Chico, and by punting on the *Starlight*'s role in the Eugene-Seattle corridor, this non-decision undercuts rail advocates' message—especially now—that a national network serves communities with few or no other transportation options, and that Amtrak is no more than a fair-weather friend in already-underserved communities.

Amtrak provides the only direct public transportation from Klamath Falls and Chemult/Bend to California; their southbound bus service is via Medford or Eugene, and air service is north via Portland. The Klamath Falls airport even refers to Amtrak in listing regional transportation options.

Amtrak's slow public-relations response to this matter is also discouraging; as of this writing, nothing about the *Starlight* disruption is on Amtrak's website. From the perspective of myself as a resident of Eugene, I see more in the media about Penn Station track rebuilding than service disruptions in my own community.

AORTA recognizes that Amtrak faces only bad options in this situation. But something is better than nothing. Nothing north of Sacramento undercuts our shared message endorsing a national, reliable network.

Respectfully yours,

Jon Nuxoll
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cc: Rob Eaton, Amtrak Northwest Government Affairs
Hon. Greg Walden
Hon. Peter DeFazio
Hal Gard, Oregon Department of Transportation
All Aboard Washington
Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada
Train Riders' Association of California
Klamath Chamber of Commerce
Bend Chamber of Commerce