

Bobbie Walthall

From: Diane Stoddard
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2018 3:43 PM
To: Bobbie Walthall
Subject: for agenda item July 10th- consent- new item re signing the City of Lawrence onto a petition about Amtrak passenger service via the Southwest Chief.

From: Christian Pace <capacedvm@gmail.com>
Date: June 24, 2018 at 10:12:05 AM CDT
To: sboley@lawrenceks.org
Subject: Amtrak Service to Lawrence

Dear Mayor Boley,

My name is Christian Pace and I am a member of the Rail Passengers Association (RPA). I am sending you this email to bring to your attention an important issue concerning the status of passenger rail service to your city. As a city that is served by Amtrak's long-distance train, the *Southwest Chief*, my association has recently learned that Amtrak management has started actively discussing breaking up long-distance routes to reallocate resources to state corridors. While we don't yet know how far these discussions have advanced, recent Amtrak moves to cut back food & beverage service on two eastern long-distance services and eliminate station agents in 15 more National Network communities has forced us to act.

In 2017, Amtrak reported there were 9,834 passengers who boarded or alighted in Lawrence. These passengers helped to contribute to the economy of Lawrence, yet the current Amtrak CEO, Richard Anderson, and Board of Directors are trying to undermine the value of long-distance trains to Midwestern communities. The *Southwest Chief* may be the first long-distance train Amtrak leadership will try to eliminate. They have already added excessive stipulations to their matching funds for the ongoing rehabilitation of the tracks the *Southwest Chief* uses in Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico that Colfax County in New Mexico has been awarded by the US Department of Transportation. Amtrak has tried to explain their reasoning to Congress in a statement which paints the *Southwest Chief* in a poor light. The former CEO of Amtrak, Joe Boardman, has written a letter to Congress stating it is his belief the "Southwest Chief has really become the battleground for the National System".

Mayor Boley, my organization is asking leaders from all Amtrak-served communities to sign on to a petition ([available here](#)) with a simple message: **while we support the railroad's efforts to grow passenger rail service, we insist it must happen in addition to National Network service, not at the expense of existing Amtrak communities.**

RPA thinks one of the best ways mayors can support the National Network is to join together and demand to be part of the conversation. This is particularly true given how recent grants have spurred local and state investment in train stations and passenger rail infrastructure.

We're asking the City of Lawrence to [sign on to our petition here](#).

Attached are some supporting documents which you may already be familiar with. I wanted to make sure to pass along ridership data for Lawrence to highlight how many people depend on this vital service. If you need further information concerning this issue or any passenger rail issues please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration.

Respectfully,

Christian Pace, DVM
Rail Passengers Association Member