



Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees

BMW LEGISLATIVE ALERT

(Final Handout for Sept. 17 Amtrak event)

AMERICA NEEDS RAILROADS

JOIN US AND SEND A MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE CONGRESS NOT TO KILL AMTRAK

- Amtrak's President, David Gunn, said Amtrak needs \$1.8 billion to maintain its operations, and, without that level of funding, he will seek to shut down Amtrak. A shut down will affect all Amtrak intercity operations and the commuter rail operations served by Amtrak.
- President Bush proposed only \$900 million for Amtrak, a death sentence for rail passenger service in the United States. The U.S. House of Representatives recently agreed to \$900 million, and even though a majority of the House members signed a letter pledging to vote for \$1.8 billion for Amtrak, the Republican leadership used procedural gimmicks to prevent a vote on that figure. The Senate appears likely to provide \$1.35 billion to Amtrak, which is better but still inadequate.
- Earlier this month, Mr. Gunn said, "*Our infrastructure and equipment is in such dire need of repair and investment that on any given day something could fail – as it already has – and large parts of the system could be shut down or the necessary consists for trains could not be met.*" Some of the cars you ride in today contain asbestos; it's there because Amtrak cannot afford to remove it safely.
- It is foolhardy for the most prosperous country in the world to abandon rail passenger service as a transportation option, especially in light of September 11th. But that is exactly the choice that has been made by the President and the Congress.
- You must understand that Congress's failure to appropriate sufficient funds for Amtrak means the end of rail passenger service in the United States. Rail passenger service is more popular than ever, and every improvement brings additional passengers. Amtrak and rail passenger service are a critical part of our transportation system.
- Amtrak's employees will not stand by idly and watch Congress kill Amtrak. Amtrak's employees work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide the best service they can to America's traveling public. Amtrak's employees work hard and have strong ties to the communities in which they work and live.
- **We will not stand by and watch the end of rail passenger service in this country without protest. We will protest the inadequate funding by withdrawing our service to Amtrak nationwide on OCTOBER 3RD. Please join with us and call your Representative and Senator and tell them to give Amtrak the funds it needs to maintain and improve its system. If you need help reaching your representative, call toll-free at 1-877-331-2000 to be connected to the Capitol Hill switchboard.**