



Empire State Passengers Association

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ESPA OPPOSES BUSH ADMINISTRATION PLAN TO BREAK-UP AMTRAK

The Bush Administration's Plan Would Lead To A Shut Down Of Amtrak

“The Empire State Passengers Association opposes the Bush Administration’s plan for passenger rail reform. We believe that their plan is a “not-so-well” disguised attempt to dismantle AMTRAK and the current national passenger rail system. We are especially concerned that the Bush plan would significantly impact travelers in the northeast, most notably the commuter passengers,” stated Bruce Becker, President of the Empire State Passengers Association.

The major components of the Bush Administration’s rail reform plan create a complicated scenario that is doomed for failure. First, the plan proposes to segregate AMTRAK’s current assets and responsibilities into two separate entities – one being responsible for operational services and one for capital assets. Second, it recommends creating a separate entity just to operate the “Northeast Corridor.” And, third, it assumes that the affected states will accept a substantial portion of the financial responsibility for the resultant passenger rail system. “We have all heard generals say ‘divide and conquer,’ but we have yet to hear one say ‘prosper by dividing.’ The Bush Administration’s plan to disperse services and assets and to shift financial responsibility to the states is nothing more than a strategy that will lead to the demise of AMTRAK,” continued Mr. Becker. “We urge all members of Congress to oppose this plan.”

The Empire State Passengers Association (ESPA), which is comprised of over 1,400 members located throughout New York State, is a “grass-roots” advocacy organization dedicated to improving passenger rail service, supporting seamless interconnectivity between public transportation modes, and promoting governmental policies that encourage balanced transportation systems.