



Empire State Passengers Association

P.O. Box 434

Syracuse, New York 13209

Release Immediately: November 16, 2005

Contact: Bruce Becker (716) 741-6384

ESPA DISAPPOINTED WITH AMTRAK BOARD'S DECISION TO FIRE DAVID GUNN

ESPA Believes That David Gunn Is A Casualty In The Bush Administration's Ongoing Efforts To Shut-Down Amtrak

ESPA was pleased when David Gunn was brought on-board to head AMTRAK back in May of 2002. He immediately began working on reviving, rehabilitating and resuscitating our long ignored national passenger rail system and these efforts were just starting to blossom and show fruit. Under Gunn's leadership, Amtrak reached record ridership levels during 2005, while continuing to reduce its dependence on federal operating support. Unfortunately, Mr. Gunn's ideas and plans, which were based upon many years of successful experience running numerous public transportation systems, did not coincide with those of the Bush Administration, which is intent upon implementing a untested package of so-called "reforms" at Amtrak, aspects of which include separating responsibility for safely maintaining and operating the Northeast Corridor among separate entities, in addition to forcing the states along the Corridor to shoulder significantly higher costs for the operation of both intercity and regional commuter services.

"The Empire State Passengers Association is saddened by the news of David Gunn's firing," said the group's President, Bruce Becker. "We respected his efforts over the past three years and we are deeply concerned about the future of AMTRAK's nationwide network based on the Administration's apparent desire to break-up major components of the rail system. We at ESPA believed that Mr. Gunn was eminently qualified to run AMTRAK, and we feel that ill-advised political agendas resulted in his downfall," concluded Mr. Becker.

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.