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Date: 7 Feb. 2016
To: Surface Transportation Board
From: Lyndon Henry
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I am writing to urge your agency to apply the STP on-time performance (OTP) standard of 30 minutes at all intermediate stations in a route (Amtrak or other carrier).

On-time performance is important to enable myself and similar Amtrak passengers to make and adhere to reliable travel plans. This will also help make rail passenger travel more competitive with other modes (e.g., personal motor vehicle, air, intercity motor coach). Passengers would find rail service far more convenient if they could rely more consistently on scheduled arrival times.

I most often use Amtrak service between Austin, Texas and other destinations (for business/professional purposes). My trips on the Texas Eagle route have included Ft. Worth, Dallas, Marshall, Longview, Texarkana, Hope, Little Rock, St. Louis, Springfield, Chicago, Tucson, Palm Springs, and Los Angeles. In recent years I have also ridden other Amtrak trains between New Orleans and Atlanta; Denver and Salt Lake City; Salt Lake City and Sacramento; Sacramento and Portland; Portland and Seattle; Portland and San Francisco; San Francisco and Los Angeles; San Francisco and Santa Barbara; Santa Barbara and Los Angeles; Los Angeles and San Diego; Los Angeles and Bakersfield; San Francisco and Bakersfield; St. Louis and Kansas City; Kansas City and Los Angeles; Chicago and Pittsburgh; Chicago and New York City; and Tampa and Washington.

Amtrak typically provides a comfortable, safe, and relaxing means of travel with time and facilities that enable me to work on professional projects, have professional discussions, etc. en route. Typically I arrive in the city center with convenient access to local public transportation. Greater reliability in arrival time (and departure time) would certainly make Amtrak a more convenient and effective mode to use.

The currently proposed OTP standard of 5 minutes late for each 100 miles of a trip, up to a maximum of 30 minutes, is reasonable, but it is critical that this be applied to intermediate stations, and not just endpoint stations. Because of excessive schedule padding on many routes, some trains may be an hour late or more at intermediate stations and still technically fulfill the "on time" standard at their endpoint terminals.

I believe this is unacceptable. The 30-minute lateness OTP standard should be applied to all stations, intermediate as well as endpoints.

Lyndon Henry