

Docket EP 726

On Time Performance For Passenger Trains

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Group/Affiliation:

I am a regular rider of Amtrak. I live in Albuquerque and use the Southwest Chief to travel to Los Angeles and Chicago. I often make connections at the western endpoint to Seattle and Portland, and at the eastern endpoint to Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York and occasionally to Miami.

I am concerned about your proposal to only consider the endpoint of a train trip when deciding whether or not the train is considered "ontime". Not considering the intermediate points in the trip encourages Amtrak to PAD the schedule at the end of the trip so that trains do arrive ontime. On recent trips terminating in Los Angeles, the Southwest Chief has frequently arrived 30 minutes early in LA, even though it departed Riverside, two stations away according to Schedule or even sometimes late. Arriving early is almost as bad as arriving late. Often someone is planning to arrive at the station to pick me up. When the train arrives early my ride is not there yet, and I have to wait in the station.

More importantly, for those passengers at the intermediate points, the ontime arrival at the end point is meaningless. These passengers need to know how often a particular train arrives at THEIR station ontime. At Albuquerque, the train has a scheduled 50 minute westbound layover and 30 minutes eastbound. The layovers may be cut short if the train is running late. The train could therefore be late in the stations preceding Albuquerque and be back on time when leaving. It is important to capture that information.