



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

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STB ESTABLISHES THE OFFICE OF PASSENGER RAIL

The Surface Transportation Board today announced that it has established the Office of Passenger Rail (OPR), effective October 1, 2022. OPR will be responsible for investigating and analyzing issues regarding Amtrak on-time performance (OTP).

Section 213 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 authorizes, and on eligible complaint requires, the STB to investigate the causes of substandard passenger rail OTP, to identify mitigating measures, and, under specified conditions, to prescribe relief. In late 2020, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), in conjunction with Amtrak, promulgated a “Customer OTP” metric to measure passenger rail OTP, with a minimum standard of 80 percent of passenger arrivals at stations to occur within 15 minutes of the scheduled time for any two consecutive calendar quarters. Complaints may be brought by Amtrak, by an entity for which Amtrak operates intercity passenger rail service, by an intercity passenger rail operator, or by a host freight railroad over which Amtrak operates.

To prepare for these new enforcement obligations, in April 2021, the Board formed a passenger rail working group consisting of STB staff. The working group was charged with developing plans to enhance the agency’s capacity to fulfill its passenger rail oversight efforts and to ensure it will fully meet its obligations to enforce OTP requirements.

In August 2021, the Board also appointed a senior staff member from the Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance, Mr. Neil Moyer, and an attorney from the Board’s Office of Proceedings, Mr. Ryan Lee, to develop and begin to implement a comprehensive plan for OTP investigation processing and resource allocation. Mr. Moyer and Mr. Lee have worked with the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Volpe National Transportation Systems Center to develop data tools to quickly analyze FRA’s on-time performance quarterly data.

“The creation of the Office of Passenger Rail is the next step in a carefully planned strategy for the Board to meet its responsibility to investigate and enforce Amtrak on-time performance,” said Chairman Martin Oberman. “The agency stands ready to handle any on-time performance cases that are filed. We are fully analyzing the quarterly data provided by the FRA, and we are

developing a basis for determining whether any Board-initiated investigations may be necessary. The other Board members and I look forward to working closely with Amtrak and the freight railroads in the nation's effort to improve its passenger rail system." Chairman Oberman added, "I want to extend my many thanks to Mr. Moyer and Mr. Lee for their excellent work as the development team for this new office."

The Board will be hiring a director for the new office, and the agency is also in the process of creating a passenger rail advisory committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act to advise the Board on passenger rail transportation issues.

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