

DARRELL E. ISSA, CALIFORNIA  
CHAIRMAN

JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA  
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO  
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE  
PATRICK T. McHENRY, NORTH CAROLINA  
JIM JORDAN, OHIO  
JASON CHAFFETZ, UTAH  
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN  
JAMES LANKFORD, OKLAHOMA  
JUSTIN AMASH, MICHIGAN  
PAUL A. GOSAR, ARIZONA  
PATRICK MEEHAN, PENNSYLVANIA  
SCOTT DESJARLAIS, TENNESSEE  
TREY GOWDY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
BLAKE FARENTHOLD, TEXAS  
DOC HASTINGS, WASHINGTON  
CYNTHIA M. LUMMIS, WYOMING  
ROB WOODALL, GEORGIA  
THOMAS MASSIE, KENTUCKY  
DOUG COLLINS, GEORGIA  
MARK MEADOWS, NORTH CAROLINA  
KERRY L. BENTIVOLIO, MICHIGAN  
RON DESANTIS, FLORIDA

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
FACSIMILE (202) 225-3974  
MINORITY (202) 225-5051  
<http://oversight.house.gov>

ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND  
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK  
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI  
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS  
JIM COOPER, TENNESSEE  
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, VIRGINIA  
JACKIE SPEIER, CALIFORNIA  
MATTHEW A. CARTWRIGHT, PENNSYLVANIA  
MARK POCAN, WISCONSIN  
L. TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS  
ROBIN L. KELLY, ILLINOIS  
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS  
PETER WELCH, VERMONT  
TONY CARDENAS, CALIFORNIA  
STEVEN A. HORSFORD, NEVADA  
MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, NEW MEXICO

LAWRENCE J. BRADY  
STAFF DIRECTOR

### Opening Statement Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings

#### Subcommittee Hearing on "Reviewing Alternatives to Amtrak's Annual Losses in Food and Beverage Service"

November 14, 2013

Amtrak is an essential part of our nation's transportation networks and is critical to ensuring mobility both on the Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington and in hundreds of communities in 46 states across our vast nation, including many communities not served by other intercity passenger transportation services.

Ticket purchases prove that the traveling public agrees with me.

In fiscal year 2013, Amtrak carried more than 31.5 million passengers -- the highest passenger volume in its history. In fact, if Amtrak were an airline, it would be the sixth largest airline in the United States.

As a member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and, like Chairman Mica, a member of that Committee's Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, I have closely observed Amtrak's operations throughout my service in the House.

In fact, during the 109th Congress, I served as the lead Democrat on the Amtrak Working Group convened by the Transportation Committee to examine Amtrak's management systems.

I have been impressed by the many efficiency gains Amtrak has made in all aspects of its operations over the past few years.

Since 2002, Amtrak has halved its corporate debt and its federal operating subsidy, while significantly improving its on-time performance and repeatedly setting ridership records.

Amtrak reported cost recovery of 79 cents of every dollar spent in fiscal year 2011—higher than all other railroads in calendar year 2011, including the Long Island Railroad, Metro North, and SEPTA.

Amtrak has also significantly improved the efficiency of its on-board food and beverage services. Since 2006, Amtrak has revised its menu, altered staffing patterns on trains, and

implemented a new contract to improve commissary functions. These measures have increased cost recovery from less than 50% in fiscal year 2006 to 65% in fiscal year 2012.

Under the leadership of President Joe Boardman, Amtrak recently announced a new initiative to eliminate the entire loss in food and beverage service over the next five years.

Among other changes, Amtrak plans to improve on-board logistics and supply chain management, establish new management procedures for its business lines, and incentivize employee performance. Amtrak will also introduce a Point-of-Sale system that will finally provide real-time data on food and beverage sales.

Many of these proposed measures have been recommended by the Amtrak Inspector General in its new audit report. These measures can be used to improve cost recovery within the parameters of the existing food and beverage service.

Sadly, while Amtrak has been working steadily in recent years to improve its service and to grow its customer base, some Republicans in Congress have been trying only to destroy this service by cutting funding, spinning off the Northeast Corridor and either privatizing it or turning responsibility for its operations over to the states along the alignment, and attempting to cut Amtrak's long-distance routes.

In fact, I remind my colleagues that the platform adopted by Republicans during their last presidential nominating convention explicitly called for the elimination of Amtrak.

It is not necessary for Amtrak to privatize food and beverage service to improve the services' efficiency. It's time to end this ideologically motivated effort to throw hurdles in Amtrak's way.

As the Transportation Committee works to craft a new Amtrak authorization, we must enact policies that will enable Amtrak to bring its infrastructure, including its station infrastructure, like Baltimore's Penn Station, into a state of good repair, continue to improve the efficiency of its services, and prepare the railroad to carry even higher passenger volumes.

---

Contact: Jennifer Hoffman, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181.