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Congressional Record S. 22430 - Amtrak Can Help the Public Transportation Crisis

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Recommended Citation

Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "Congressional Record S. 22430 - Amtrak Can Help the Public Transportation Crisis" (1973). *Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews*. 1150.
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the logical solution to some of these transportation problems but, to date, there has been little, if any, response to the needs of the travelling public. The passenger train system in our Nation was at its lowest ebb when Amtrak took over most of the Nation's passenger service. This was at a time when the railroad companies themselves abandoned the traditional strong-arm of our Nation's transportation system—the passenger train. Today, we have an excellent chance to regain opportunities for the passenger train.

The current energy crisis pleads for more economical means of transportation for our public. In my estimation, the passenger train system is the most economical and logical answer. Airline schedules have been reduced and automobile travel is being discouraged. Railroads consume less diesel fuel on a per capita basis. Trains require less fuel than any other mode of transportation. I am informed that Amtrak carries 80 passengers for 1 mile for a gallon of gasoline. In addition, there is a sincere demand for improved passenger trains and the energy crisis has severely aggravated this need.

The U.S. Postal Service, which is having its own serious operational problems is now concerned that the energy crisis will reduce available means of transporting mail. Why not put the mail back on the trains? I believe the Nation's mail delivery system was far more efficient 5 years ago when the railroads were the major conveyer of all classes of mail, except air.

Despite repeated appeals from the people of Montana and their representatives in the Congress, Amtrak continues to refuse to expand passenger service when the need is increased beyond all predictions. During the holiday season, thousands of people just in my State alone are being turned away by the Amtrak ticket agents.

I wish to propose a series of questions that Amtrak must respond to if they are sincere in their effort to make the Nation's passenger train system work.

Why has Amtrak continued to refuse to establish daily passenger train service through the southern route in Montana where the need far exceeds service available?

Does Amtrak maintain an inventory of unused equipment?

How many cars and engines could be put into service immediately, not now on the line?

Are delays in upgrading and purchase of rolling stock due to unavailability of funds?

Has Amtrak made overtures to the U.S. Postal Service in reassuming a greater responsibility for hauling mail?

I have received repeated accusations that Amtrak officials discourage passenger service whenever possible, especially on select routes. Is this true?

Are all members of the Amtrak Corporate Board fully committed to a renewed and vigorous national system of passenger trains?

Finally, do Amtrak officials agree that passenger trains could be a very important part of the solution to the Nation's energy crisis?

AMTRAK CAN HELP THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CRISIS

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I do not want to sound repetitious but I feel that the crisis in public transportation brought about by the current energy shortage is worthy of repeated comments until something is done. Amtrak is

