



RAIL PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION

PASSENGERS Voice

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RAILNATION COMES TO CALIFORNIA



Photo Credit: The Daily Herald

Our best fall event yet! Make plans to attend **RailNation:California** in Sacramento, on Friday, October 18 through Monday, October 21.

Planning has been in high gear for the past few months, and we think this is truly going to be our best meeting yet! Over the four-day gathering, passenger rail advocates from across the country will take in area tours and trips, in addition to participating in Saturday's all-day Advocacy Symposium. Great speakers will talk about both history and the future, and real hands-on workshops will give you the tools you need to go back home and fight for passenger rail! The Association's Council of Representatives will hold its fall business meeting on Sunday morning.

Confirmed event speakers for Saturday's Advocacy Symposium include:

- **Yvonne Burke** - Amtrak Board Member
- **Chad Edison** - Deputy Secretary for Transportation - California State Transportation Agency
- **Jim Allison** - Manager of Planning - Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

Saturday's sessions will focus on three thematic tracks – 'Inclusion & Equity,' 'Making Change Happen,' & 'What Passengers Want'. **Meeting Registration Is Now Open** and **Tour & Trip Tickets** Are Also On Sale!

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RAIL PASSENGERS WELCOMES KIM WILLIAMS

My name is Kim Williams, and I am RPA's first Membership Manager. In this role, I will take a more in-depth look at Rail Passengers' current

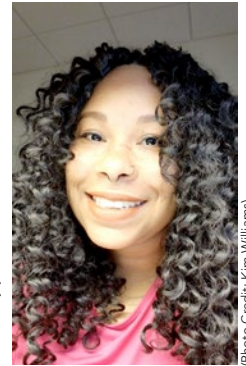


Photo Credit: Kim Williams

membership and stewardship efforts and create a robust plan for ensuring that the member "journey" is satisfying and efficient. This will range from updating member communications to implementing member recruitment strategies to upgrading member benefits, with a hope that any new members feel as engaged and vocal in their rail advocacy as our veteran members.

I was most recently the National Health Council's Senior Associate, Member Services and

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“Citizens should be able to say to whatever their plans are, and not have outside entities come in and sway the process by putting a lot of money towards it. It is just completely wrong.”

Maria Hyatt, Friends of Transit (AZ)



RAIL PASSENGERS

ASSOCIATION

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Certifications, where I worked to increase member retention and engagement, streamline internal processes to support member needs, and manage the governance-based Standards of Excellence Certification Program to help nonprofit patient organization members exceed industry standards in organizational effectiveness. Prior to that experience, I volunteered full-time as an AmeriCorps member with education-based nonprofit City Year, and later worked in professional services with the educational software company Hobsons. I have a bachelor's degree in elementary education with minors in history and mathematics from the Massachusetts College of

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FYI...Discounted Group Rate Room Reservations at the host hotel, the Sheraton Grand Downtown, are now SOLD-OUT! **A list of alternative nearby hotels and rates is now available!**

Please note there are NO special arrangements with any of these alternative hotels. Be sure to check out the **RailNation:California** event page for more information, the current agenda and further details.

Great sponsorship opportunities have been developed for RailNation:California. Please send **Jonsie Stone** contact information for any organizations/individuals you think RPA should contact to discuss supporting the event. And to make all of this a success, we need volunteers for the event! **Check out these volunteer opportunities** and contact **Bruce Becker** if you can help! Event volunteers who complete their agreed upon duties will receive 300 Amtrak Guest Rewards points as our 'thank you'!

And, as an optional component of RailNation: California, an intensive, **'Hands-On' Advocacy Workshop**, led by Rail Passengers' Vice-President of Policy Sean Jeans-Gail, will be held on Friday, October 18, from 1:00pm to 5:00pm.

Staff members from Rail Passengers' federal and state policy team will engage with workshop participants in a small group setting on the A to Z of advocacy. We'll teach you advocacy best practices, help you figure out the best strategy for interacting with elected officials and policymakers, and give you a blueprint for launching a

successful campaign to improve service in your town—whether it's local transit, commuter, or intercity rail and Amtrak.

This workshop will focus on giving advocates the following tools to:

- **Define achievable goals:** whether it's launching a new service, a new frequency, or getting an issue on the ballot, you need to determine a workable path to get you where you want to go.
- **Build coalitions:** recruit like-minded advocates, national and local advocacy organizations, business partners, and elected officials. We'll tackle the hard questions about how to maintain partnerships in the face of adversity and competing interests.
- **Guide the narrative:** learn how to engage through social media, connect with traditional media outlets and reporters, and find the right message to cut through the noise.
- **Establish a campaign blueprint:** create a calendar for sustainable grassroots action, making intelligent use of limited financial resources and volunteer labor.

Workshop participants will leave not only with the knowledge to execute effective advocacy efforts, but with a tool-kit of sorts as well. The interactive nature of the workshop will provide materials needed to hit the ground running in their advocacy work.

The Workshop is \$20.00 per person and **advance registration is required**. Space is limited!

VIEW FROM THE HILL

With August recess in full swing for members of Congress and their staff, the Rail Passengers leadership targeted their elected officials to deliver a clear message about the importance of the National Network to communities all across the U.S.

In response to input from our members regarding the Rail Passengers blueprint for reauthorization (which can be read in full at www.RailPassengers.org/Blueprint), our policy team has been holding a number of meetings about the implications of these service changes with our allies on the Hill and like-minded organizations. These meetings laid the groundwork for a few key concepts:

- In the absence of a compelling vision for the National Network pursued actively by Amtrak, Congress must provide that vision in the surface transportation reauthorization set to take place over the next 12 months.
- Ensuring certain basic levels of onboard service and station staffing for the entire National Network are valid equity issues that must be addressed in both appropriations and reauthorization language.

With that in mind, we're working with other transportation and labor organizations to deliver two key messages to Congressional offices over the next few months. **We're asking Rail Passengers members to help us deliver these messages your Congressional Delegation**

in September:

1. Congress must ensure that Amtrak provides passengers a basic level of onboard service for the National Network to operate sustainably.

2. Key policy language secured by passengers in the House T-HUD FY2020 Appropriations bill must be preserved in the upcoming Senate Appropriations Bill.

Just dial the United States Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121, and a switchboard operator will connect you directly with the Senate office you request.

SUSTAINABLE LEVELS

While all the recent changes to service may appear small when considered individually, taken together they constitute "death by a thousand cuts" for services that rural communities depend upon. Congress itself stated that "1) long-distance passenger rail routes provide much-needed transportation access for 4,700,000 riders in 325 communities in 40 States and are particularly important in rural areas; and 2) long-distance passenger rail routes and services should be sustained to ensure connectivity throughout the National Network."

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

The Senate will advance its version of the Fiscal Year 2020 budget this month in advance of the September 30th deadline. Its important that we ensure the protections for passengers and the National Network, secured in the House budget, are included in

the Senate version.

As a reminder, these **policy wins** include the following provisions:

- The House reminded Amtrak that it is statutorily required to operate a national passenger rail system.
- The House directed Amtrak to seek any potential changes to the National Network through the Congressional reauthorization process, and urged Amtrak to ensure any such proposals also increase ridership in rural areas and improve service for long-distance customers.
- The House directed Amtrak to "conduct comprehensive outreach and consultation" with a whole range of stakeholders, including "passenger rail organizations"—such as Rail Passengers—noting that Amtrak "must engage in an open and transparent process."
- The House expressed concern that Amtrak continues to make and implement changes to operations and services without providing the public or its employees adequate time to understand proposed changes and provide feedback. "Amtrak has made changes to policies and procedures relating to charter trains, private cars, station agents, call centers, food and beverage service, and law enforcement,

SAVING LIGHT RAIL IN PHOENIX

Phoenix residents voted on August 27 on an anti-rail ballot measure that would kill expansion plans for the city's rapidly growing light rail system, and ban the city from investing in any intercity passenger rail or commuter rail projects. [While the question was undecided as of the print deadline, you can read how the vote turned out at www.RailPassengers.org.]

Rail Passengers joined a diverse coalition of groups opposed to Proposition 105, including All Aboard Arizona, United Phoenix Fire Fighters, the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, AARP Arizona, Greater Phoenix Leadership, and the AZ Chapter Associated General Contractors. We urged all our members to vote "No" and to encourage friends and family to join them, since organizers were worried the low turnout that attends special elections would benefit the anti-rail side.

If passed, Prop. 105 would:

- Stop all light rail construction and kill voter-approved light rail plans
- Permanently prohibit Phoenix from investing in any kind of rail project—including light rail, commuter rail, or other potential train connections.
- Turn away billions in federal dollars designated for Phoenix, sending it to cities in other states.

City leaders launched a campaign to explain to voters that the streetcar system has generated billions in economic activity and is an important part of creating a vibrant, livable community in central Phoenix.



Phoenix Light Rail

"We've had more than \$10 billion of public and private investment along the light rail line," said Greg Stanton, an Arizona congressman and former mayor of Phoenix. "Transit has made us a more urban environment. It gets us closer to our climate goals than anything will. It's changed Phoenix in ways that nothing else ever has, and support for it has only grown around the Valley."

The "yes" side had one distinct advantage: millions of dollars in dark money from out of state provided by the Koch Brothers. The Kochs have launched successful attacks on transit systems across the U.S., seeing success in ballot measures in Little Rock and Nashville.

And while the Kochs seem to view it as just another front in their war on publicly-funded services, local rail advocates see dire consequences if they are successful.

"Where does it go from there if they're successful here?" asked Maria Hyatt, chair of the Arizona nonprofit Friends of Transit. "Citizens should be able to say to whatever their plans are, and not have outside entities come in and sway the process by putting a lot of money towards it. It is just completely wrong."

ADAPTATIVE RAIL SOLUTION

- Talgo Series 8 Adapted to North American Standards
- Talgo 350 Sturdy and Efficient at High Speed
- Talgo Avril Maximum Capacity at High Speed

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WILLIAMS, from p. 2

Liberal Arts. I proudly hail from Washington, DC and frequently look for opportunities to advocate for social equity around the city.

Finally, I would like to thank members **Mike Weber** and **Harvard Morehead** for their warm welcomes! I am excited to talk to more Rail Passengers members at RailNation:California this year and hear about your experiences advocating for A Connected America.

SUMMER BY RAIL: THANK YOU!

The Rail Passengers Association would like to express our sincere appreciation to the **Summer By Rail** sponsors. Without your support, the "greatest internship in America" would not have been possible. 23 cities in 50 days is a tremendous undertaking and we all came together to make it happen. You welcomed Chef Madi into your city with open arms and showed her what made your city special. Summer By Rail draws attention to its host cities and their transportation needs hoping to spur discussion around the larger community benefit. Rail Passengers is humbled by your desire to become involved and we look forward to collaborating on future projects. See you on the rail!

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RAIL PASSENGERS

A CONNECTED AMERICA

JOIN RAIL PASSENGERS

If you're reading the Passengers Voice and are a current member, **THANK YOU** for your support. Rail Passengers invites you to share our membership information with your family, friends, colleagues, etc.

If you're reading the Passengers Voice and NOT a current member, we invite you to join.

Visit railpassengers.org/join or call 202-408-6382 to become a member!



RAIL PASSENGERS MEMBERS SHARE THOUGHTS, POLL RESULTS

QUESTION...

HAVE YOU CANCELED OR FOREGONE A TRIP ON AMTRAK BECAUSE OF CHANGES TO ONBOARD DINING OPTIONS?



- A. Yes** - Amenities are important for my travel choice.
- B. No** - Amtrak is still a superior way to travel around the U.S.

Click here to submit your answer to this poll on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/narprail>, or send in your response via email to: survey@narprail.org.

Each month we conduct polls on social media and in our newsletters to spark conversation and provide another outlet for you to share your thoughts on rail.

In the July/August issue, we asked **"Should the Rail Passengers Association fight to support all rail transportation or primarily long-distance trains?"**

An overwhelming majority, **70%**, answered 'Support All Passenger Rail', while **30%** responded 'Primarily Support Long Distance'

Poll comments included:

- **John Morgan Christoph** - The focus of our organization should not be merely on maintaining Amtrak; it should be on allowing all Americans to travel both within and between cities and towns across the USA without having to own or rent a private automobile, and the recognition that trains are the most efficient way to achieve that.
- **Daniel Gilliam** - While it is important to protect all passenger rail transport in this nation, short distance commuter, light rail, and tourist operations are not under direct threat at present. Long distance rail travel is, and if it should fall, Amtrak falls. Therefore, I vote that Long Distance should take priority.

#RAIL PASSENGERS TRAVEL REVIEW

Feedback on your recent Amtrak travel experience is very important to us! Please take a moment and tell us the good & the



bad of your journey. Share your thoughts at railpassengers.org/travelreview or scan the QR code from your mobile device.

Remember, the progression of the data we collect depends upon the feedback

you provide as well as your outreach to other rail passengers. Please help us to keep this going. If you have any constructive feedback or suggestion, please send an email to TravelReview@narprail.org.

#VIEWSONATRAIN

We are sharing many of the great photos we have received on Instagram (www.instagram.com/railpassengers).

We are also still looking for more submissions. Photos can be submitted via Instagram, Facebook or Twitter depicting your experience as "The Rail Passenger" and your views from a train.

Rail Passengers Association staff will select images, which we will use as part of our new visual identity on our website, in our monthly newsletter, on social media, and more!

When submitting your photos on social media, be sure to use the hashtag #ViewsOnATrain and tag @RailPassengers.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Please consider the Rail Passengers Association in your will. If you have already included us in your estate plans, let Jonsie Stone know at jstone@narprail.org or 202.408.8362 Ext. 3207. We'd like

to thank you for your generosity and make sure the purpose of your gift is understood.



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all of which have impacts on its ridership, employees, and communities. Therefore, the Committee directs Amtrak to increase engagement with customers, employees, stakeholders, and the public on proposals to change operations and services, including providing an opportunity to comment on policies prior to finalizing decisions."

- The House directed Amtrak to provide a station agent in each Amtrak station that had a ticket agent position eliminated in fiscal year 2018.
- The House expressed concern with the way Amtrak handled changes to private car service,

noting that Amtrak "does not typically inform private car owners when a private car caused a delay to an Amtrak train."

The House agreed with the Amtrak Inspector General's conclusions that Amtrak cannot accurately assess and make informed decisions about the private car program until Amtrak properly identifies the costs of the program.

The House directed Amtrak to submit a report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations within 90 days of enactment of this Act detailing its plan to standardize the cost and revenue analysis for the private car program.



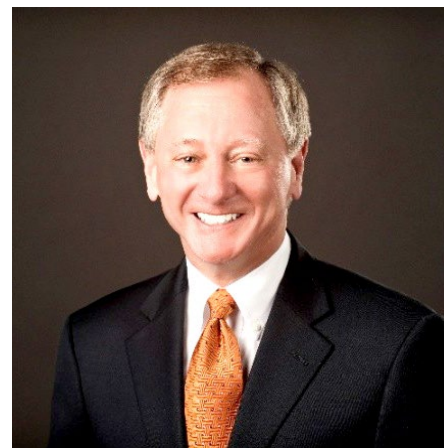
ON THE MOVE

Local, state and federal transit agencies have seen several new hires and appointments in October. A few of them include:

• **Stephen Kingsley** has been appointed as Amtrak’s new Assistant Vice-President, Food & Beverage, based out of Washington, DC. Stephen comes to Amtrak from American Airlines, where he held the post of Managing Director – Food & Beverage for over 5 years. His prior experience includes over 30 years with US Airways in

customer service roles. Stephen is on the Board of Directors of the International Flight Services Association.

• **Carolyn Gonot** has been selected as the new Executive Director of the Utah Transit Authority. Carolyn is a 25-year transit professional with a background in Civil Engineering. She is joining the UTA after 22 years with Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority (VTA) where she led the funding and planning for the



(Photo Credit: LinkedIn)

Stephen Kingsley

16-mile, six-station extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system into San Jose.

Upcoming Regional Rail Passengers Association and State Passengers Association Member Meetings & Events

Saturday, September 21

- **Carolinas Association for Passenger Trains Meeting – Charlotte, NC**

Monday, September 30

- **Media Event Marking The 40th Anniversary Of The Demise Of The Floridian Nashville, TN**

Saturday, October 5

- **Empire State Passengers Association Meeting – Schenectady, NY**

Please contact Bruce Becker (bbecker@narprail.org) to have a local, state or regional meeting added to the Rail Passengers calendar (print and online) of upcoming events!



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