

# TTD NEWS RELEASE

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## Transportation Labor: Congress Must Advance Long-Term Plan for Amtrak

ORLANDO, FL—As lawmakers prepare to debate passenger rail reauthorization, leaders of AFL-CIO transportation unions are calling on Congress to set a long-term future for Amtrak that meets the demands of a growing ridership, invests in the railroad's decaying equipment and network, protects the rights and jobs of workers and rejects "risky" privatization of key routes and services.

"While Americans are clamoring for more transportation options, Congress must ensure that Amtrak and its employees have the resources necessary to meet the nation's growing rail transportation needs," said Edward Wytkind, president of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD). "Inaction and neglect in Washington have left Amtrak with an enormous backlog of critical upgrades to its infrastructure and rail cars."

In 2013 both the House and Senate will draft legislation to provide funding and structure to our nation's passenger rail network. A [policy statement](#) adopted by TTD's Executive Committee urges Congress to replace the current policy of "underinvestment and disrepair" with a long-term plan that modernizes our passenger and freight rail infrastructure and discards proposals to "sell-off the carrier's most prized routes and assets, and hollow out the remainder of the network."

Transportation unions emphasized Amtrak's readiness to lead the nation's expansion into both higher speed and conventional passenger rail services.

Amtrak has "an extensive reservation system, mature relationships with the freight railroads, the physical infrastructure needed to support high-speed rail initiatives and decades of demonstrated compliance with all federal rail laws," the Executive Committee declared, adding that as billions in new public investments are rolled out in the rewrite of federal rail policy, "the reauthorization must safeguard the rights, jobs and wages of front-line workers."

Wytkind added: "We will mobilize behind this sensible plan to rewrite our passenger rail laws and give our government the tools it needs to execute a national rail policy."

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*The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, represents 33 member unions in the aviation, rail, transit, motor carrier, highway, longshore, maritime and related industries. For more information, visit us at [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org) or on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*