
FRA 04 -20
Friday, March 20, 2020
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News

Federal Railroad Administration Proposes Rule to Measure the Performance and Service Quality of Intercity Passenger Trains

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is proposing a rule to measure the performance and service quality of intercity passenger train operations. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) would define Amtrak intercity passenger train on-time performance, and would set forth – on average – a minimum on-time performance standard of 80%.

“Eighty percent is a minimum standard,” FRA Administrator Ronald L. Batory said. “We expect many routes will be much more reliable. Clarity should help all parties ensure compliance.”

The proposed performance and service quality metrics would give customers, Amtrak, its service providers, FRA and others a common tool to help objectively gauge intercity passenger train travel.

“After extensive stakeholder consultation, FRA is proposing new metrics to promote transparency for railroads and travelers alike,” Batory said. “We expect that all parties are interested in achieving higher performance.”

As part of this effort, FRA and Amtrak consulted with many stakeholders, including each of the Class I railroads that host Amtrak trains, states, Amtrak employee labor organizations, an advocacy group representing Amtrak passengers, and the Surface Transportation Board.

This rule proposes additional measurements for evaluating how well Amtrak serves the public, including financial performance and customer service metrics.

The NPRM is expected to be published in the *Federal Register* in the near future. Written public comments on the NPRM may be submitted on or before 60 days from the date of the NPRM's publication in the *Federal Register*. FRA intends to hold a public hearing, the details of which will be described in a future notice. FRA will likely decide to hold a virtual public hearing, to ensure consistency with CDC guidance.

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