

Milwaukee Ald. Bauman: Council on board in opposing reduction in Amtrak's long-distance train network

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Ald. Robert J. Bauman

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Council on board in opposing reduction in Amtrak's long-distance train network

Today the Common Council approved legislation placing the City of Milwaukee on record opposing any reduction of Amtrak's long-distance passenger train network, any reductions in on-board services and amenities and urging Amtrak and Congress to maintain and expand those services.

Authored by **Alderman Robert J. Bauman**, Common Council file #180324 applies to all Amtrak services, especially rail service in Wisconsin that includes destinations in Milwaukee, Columbus, Portage, Wisconsin Dells, Tomah, and La Crosse. The Hiawatha service from Milwaukee to Chicago is the **sixth busiest** Amtrak route outside the Northeast Corridor.

Wisconsin tourism and businesses are at greatest risk of negative impacts from reduction to Amtrak's long-distance passenger train services as there will be fewer tourists traveling to Wisconsin and Milwaukee by rail, and it will significantly lower the amount of money Amtrak spends on procurement of goods and services from Wisconsin businesses, according to Alderman Bauman.

"Amtrak spent \$12.7 million on the procurement of goods and services from Wisconsin businesses in fiscal 2017, and also paid almost \$4.7 million in wages to Wisconsin residents," Alderman Bauman said. "We need Amtrak services

maintained and expanded and recent system downgrades or reductions reversed.”

The resolution notes Amtrak offers a viable alternative to personal car travel in a nation of overcrowded highways, an ever-more-congested air travel system and a deteriorating network of intercity bus service – particularly for disabled and elderly Americans, many of whom are unable to drive or fly.

Amtrak legislation approved/ADD ONE

The City of Milwaukee’s investment in Amtrak includes \$6.25 million in tax incremental district funding provided for the 2007 redevelopment that transformed the former circa-1965 rail station into the Milwaukee Intermodal Station. Also, in 2016 work was completed on a new \$22 million passenger concourse and train shed at the Intermodal Station, with a mezzanine and escalators and elevators that connect to new, ADA-compliant platforms.