

I, Mayor Rhodes-Conway, would like to participate in the public hearing on February 15th regarding Docket No. FD 36469. Representing the City of Madison Mayor's office.

303717

Speaker: Mayor Rhodes-Conway

Time Requested 15 minutes

Key Points

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- Freight traffic, for instance, is one of the biggest sources of delay for passenger rail, causing 1.2 million miles of delay (<http://blog.amtrak.com/2019/05/why-are-amtrak-trains-delayed-by-freight-trains/>, 2018). The change to the law would improve the on-time performance of Amtrak by reducing “freight train interference” that can occur by freight train dispatching decisions.
- This change is not being requested in a vacuum – this is occurring at the same time as the BIL provides funding for investments in freight rail corridors with passenger service.
- This is impactful, since the vast majority of freight railroad networks are privately owned AND maintained (<https://www.aar.org/article/freight-rails-private-investments/>) and just under 30% of all freight is moved by rail (<https://railroads.dot.gov/rail-network-development/freight-rail-overview>) – so these rail networks are critically important to the US economy
- The BIL provides \$66 billion for in funding for rail, much of which is tied for passenger investments (<https://railroads.dot.gov/BIL>) but could be used to improve these private freight corridors
- Bringing freight to Madison will provide the opportunity to leverage federal funding for freight rail improvements including:
 - Targeted double-tracking for passing, which will be used by both freight and Amtrak for passing
 - Refurbishment of existing bridge structures between Milwaukee and Madison
 - Improvements to curve radii and slopes of existing track to improve speed and safety of operation.
 - Improvements and/or elimination of rail crossings
- These improvements will provide the opportunity to bring passenger rail directly to Madison while also improving the safety and efficiency of freight operations to and through the region.
- We're happy to note that the operators in our area have been very good to Amtrak and cause minimal delay.