



AORTA

Association of Oregon
Rail and Transit Advocates

Rail Service Restoration

May 27, 2021



Daily Service Is Back!

On Monday, May 24, daily service resumed on three of our western United States national network Amtrak trains serving Washington and Oregon.

Amtrak's **Coast Starlight** directly serves 30 large and small communities between Seattle and Los Angeles. Tuesday, May 25 marks the day every community along the route will be "back to normal" following the temporary reduction in service in response to the global pandemic.

Amtrak's **Empire Builder**, serving 46 communities between Chicago, Portland, and Seattle; and the **California Zephyr**, serving 35 communities from Chicago to the San Francisco Bay area, have also resumed daily service in each direction.

On May 31 and June 7, seven other national network trains will return to daily service. These long distance Amtrak services connect over 500 cities, large and small, throughout the United States.

Our regional **Amtrak Cascades** service also began operating more frequently on Monday. One round trip between Portland and Seattle was restarted, in addition to one between Seattle and Eugene, Oregon. After the US-Canada border reopens, one **Cascades** train to Vancouver, British Columbia will be restored.

Plans adopted by Oregon and Washington call for as many as 13 daily round trips between Seattle and Portland, four between Vancouver, BC and Seattle¹, and six between Portland and Eugene². But we need even faster, more frequent, and more reliable trains serving more communities throughout the Pacific Northwest and the nation.

Food service on our trains has not yet "returned to normal," but with your help, we will soon see these improvements as well.

Our Advocacy Goals

All Aboard Washington (AAWA) and the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA) share a number of goals for improving passenger rail in the Pacific Northwest.

Passenger Rail Trust Fund

We cannot expand our rail network without reliable funding. Creating a predictable, dedicated, and self-contained Passenger Rail Trust Fund will give Amtrak the stability it needs to develop a route network that serves more people.

Interstate Rail Compacts

Trains are better when states work together on planning and operations. Congress should approve the Interstate Rail Compacts Advancement Act to facilitate the creation of interstate rail commissions, which promote closer regional coordination for rail.

Greater West Working Group

Congressional working groups keep projects moving over the long term. A working group between western states, agencies, and other parties must be created to keep critical projects from losing momentum when government officials and staff turn over.

A Better Columbia River Crossing

The Washington State and Oregon Departments of Transportation (WSDOT and ODOT) are considering another expensive Columbia River highway bridge project which would widen I-5 and ignore rail alternatives. Making better use of the current rail and road bridges would minimize the need for new infrastructure and taxes to solve mobility problems.

¹ 2019 Washington State Rail Plan

² 2010 Oregon Rail Study

How You Can Help

AAWA and AORTA promote equitable, economical, and environmentally-friendly transportation solutions. We believe Northwest residents and visitors should have the freedom to travel anywhere, all day, without depending on cars or airplanes. There are many ways you can help us improve mobility through better rail and transit access.

Join Our Organizations or Donate

The continuing work of AORTA and AAWA is made possible only through your membership dues and generous donations. AAWA and AORTA are certified 501(c)(3) nonprofit consumer organizations under IRS provisions. Dues and donations to AORTA and AAWA may be tax-deductible as charitable contributions for income tax purposes.

Join or donate to AAWA at aawa.us/support/ , or by calling **(360) 529-5552**

Join or donate to AORTA at aortarail.org/get-involved/ , or by calling **(503) 241-7185**

Please join, renew, or donate to help us make trains and transit better. Thank you for your support!

Contact Your Elected Representatives

There is more interest in passenger rail and transit than ever before. But elected officials **need** to hear your voices demanding more and better public transportation options. Writing emails, letters, and calling local, state, and national officeholders makes an enormous difference for our cause. ***Let them know why good public transportation is important to you, and they will be more likely to support the projects you want to become reality.***

Volunteer

AAWA and AORTA need volunteers to assist with several critical tasks, including:

- Local Outreach
- Event Planning
- Newsletter Editing
- Writing Engaging Content
- Social Media Management

Connect With Us

Follow AAWA and AORTA on Facebook to learn more about our upcoming events and meetings, or just to introduce yourself to us. We plan to begin hosting more social events across Oregon and Washington as health concerns and safety regulations are relaxed.