

Amtrak Starts the Process for New Overnight Trains

First formal step to replace overnight trains in four decades

WASHINGTON – A new era at Amtrak accelerates this year, with as many as ten manufacturers submitting their ideas on replacement railcars for world-famous routes such as the [Auto Train](#), [California Zephyr](#), [Coast Starlight](#), [Crescent](#), [Empire Builder](#) and [Southwest Chief](#). This marks the first formal step to completely reequip the Amtrak [Long Distance Network](#) that provides vital service on 14 overnight routes from coast to coast.

“Purchasing new long distance train cars will allow Amtrak to upgrade and modernize the iconic and vital overnight services that link our nation’s major regions. We are looking for new trains that improve safety, reliability, accessibility, and efficiency while offering the features our customers believe are most important to modernizing overnight train travel for the 21st century,” said [Amtrak Board Chair Tony Coscia](#).

Last month, a Request for Information was sent to potential suppliers defining and describing the scope of Amtrak’s overnight train fleet—including Superliner I & II, Viewliner I & II and Amfleet II railcars—and solicited input from manufacturers regarding the replacement of this equipment. As part of this effort, Amtrak is also researching design elements and customer amenities to evolve overnight and cross-country train travel in the coming decades.

Later this year, Amtrak plans to take the next step by issuing a formal procurement request. Funding for the future purchases is being provided to Amtrak through the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act enacted by Congress and the Biden Administration in 2021.

“This represents the final phase in our long-term plan to replace our trains—beginning with [new Acela equipment](#) and continuing with the [Amtrak Airo™ trains](#) announced last month,” Coscia said. “We believe in the future of our Long Distance service and we look forward to enhancing the customer experience across the Amtrak network, and further supporting U.S. manufacturing.”

The existing fleet of overnight railcars has been delivered to Amtrak over the course of 40 years—with the first of more than 800 cars entering service in 1979. Most of the equipment in the current fleet will approach the end of its service life after the next decade.

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Last year, Amtrak ordered [125 new diesel-electric locomotives](#), primarily for use on Long Distance routes. Over the last two years, Amtrak has invested \$580 million toward \$1.75 billion in accessibility improvements at Amtrak stations—largely along these routes. Additionally, Amtrak dedicated \$28 million to [refresh railcars in the current overnight fleet](#), aiming to bridge the future fleet's arrival.

Reactions:

"Long-distance passenger rail is important to Kansans, and I have been working to secure a commitment from Amtrak to preserve these routes. This announcement demonstrates Amtrak's dedication to routes like the *Southwest Chief*, which provide valuable service to Kansas and the nation. I look forward to continue working with Amtrak on further investments in long-distance passenger rail service," said [Sen. Jerry Moran](#), R-Kan.

"The *Empire Builder* is an asset to small business owners and working folks along the Hi-Line who rely on daily service to sustain their businesses and support their families. I am proud to have worked with Amtrak to restore full *Empire Builder* service and I will keep fighting to make sure that passengers from rural America have access to the reliable and quality service they deserve. These long-distance upgrades are a step in the right direction," said [Sen. Jon Tester](#), D-Mont.

"Amtrak's progress in replacing its overnight trains with funds provided in the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill is welcome news for America's heartland. This investment in modern equipment will bring comfortable, more efficient, and more reliable rail service to Nebraska, and all other states where Amtrak operates long distance trains such as the *California Zephyr*," said [Rep. Don Bacon](#), R-Neb.

"I am proud that my vote for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is helping to transform long-distance passenger rail service and modernize Amtrak. This funding will support the iconic *City of New Orleans* route that passes through Memphis on its way south from Chicago. I look forward to working with Amtrak as it makes these major improvements in passenger rail service," said [Rep. Steve Cohen](#), D-Tenn., a senior member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

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