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THE DUMA CONGRESS STUDY GROUP

**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

CORRINE BROWN
3D DISTRICT, FLORIDA

June 2, 2011

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The Honorable John Mica
Chair
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chair
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and
Hazardous Materials
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mica and Chairman Shuster:

On May 26, 2011, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a hearing on "Opening the Northeast Corridor to Private Competition for Development of High-Speed Rail." At that hearing, you circulated a chart derived from Amtrak annual and monthly reports which showed a decrease in ridership on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) from 10.6 million riders in 1977 to 10.5 million riders in 2010.

The chart compares "apples" to "oranges". You cannot compare riders in 2010 with riders in 1976 when many of the trains and routes that operated in 1976 no longer exist. Your staff used Amtrak annual and monthly reports to obtain the information; however, Amtrak's assignment of routes to ridership categories has changed significantly over time. Therefore, staff should have reviewed the trains and routes within those categories to provide an accurate comparison. For example, in 1976, Amtrak ran Clocker trains, which was a commuter train from New York to Philadelphia. That service made up about one-half of the ridership on the NEC; however, the service was taken over by New Jersey Transit in 2005. To compare 1976 ridership (which included Clocker ridership) with 2010 ridership (which had no Clocker service) does not provide a valid comparison. If you remove the Clocker service from the calculation, which is an accurate comparison, then service on the NEC has actually increased from 6.4 million riders in 1976 to 10.4 million riders in 2010, a 38 percent increase.

Your chart also maintained that NEC ridership peaked in 2000, with a total of 12.9 million riders. In 2000, NEC ridership in Amtrak's annual and monthly reports included the following trains: Metroliners, the Ethan Allen Express, the Vermonter, the Northeast Direct, the Clockers, Philadelphia to Harrisburg, the Empire, the Adirondack, New York - Harrisburg, and Special Trains. However, in 2010, many of these trains are now assigned to State-supported routes and are no longer assigned to the NEC, which is why the 2010 ridership levels show a lower number of riders.

A corrected chart shows that ridership on the NEC peaked in 2008, with 10.9 million riders. There was a slight decrease from 2008 to 2009 due to the economic crisis but ridership for 2011 is likely to exceed 2008 levels, and set a new Amtrak NEC ridership record.

Similar issues rise regarding calculation of long distance and state-supported routes because some of the long distance routes that existed in the 1990s no longer exist or are now State-supported routes. A more accurate depiction of long distance and state-supported routes would be to compare the annual number of train-miles, which I included in a separate chart.

I am submitting the enclosed charts for the record but I wanted to make sure I brought these issues to your personal attention in advance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Corrine Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Corrine Brown
Ranking Democrat
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and
Hazardous Materials

Cc: The Honorable Nick Rahall, Ranking Democrat, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

CORRECT VERSION

Amtrak Ridership (millions)					
using consistent route groupings as defined in 2010					
from Amtrak Monthly Earnings Reports					
Fiscal Year	NEC Spine		Long Distance	State supported/ Short distance	System Total
	Clockers only	without Clockers			
1971					
1972					16.6
1973					16.9
1974					18.2
1975					17.4
1976	3.1	6.4	4.0	4.5	18.0
1977	3.1	6.8	4.3	5.1	19.2
1978	2.7	7.0	3.9	5.3	18.9
1979	2.3	7.9	4.9	6.2	21.4
1980	2.4	7.9	4.2	6.6	21.2
1981	2.2	7.4	4.5	6.5	20.6
1982	2.0	7.4	3.9	5.8	19.0
1983	2.4	7.0	4.0	5.6	19.0
1984	2.4	7.7	4.4	5.5	19.9
1985	2.3	8.2	4.5	5.8	20.8
1986	2.0	8.2	4.6	5.5	20.3
1987	2.1	8.2	4.7	5.5	20.4
1988	2.1	8.7	5.0	5.6	21.5
1989	2.0	8.7	5.0	5.7	21.4
1990	2.0	8.5	5.1	6.6	22.2
1991	1.9	8.3	5.2	6.7	22.0
1992	1.7	7.8	5.0	6.8	21.4
1993	1.7	7.9	5.0	7.1	21.8
1994	1.7	7.6	4.6	7.3	21.2
1995	1.7	7.9	4.2	6.8	20.7
1996	1.6	7.7	3.8	6.5	19.7
1997	1.5	7.7	3.9	7.2	20.2
1998	1.7	8.0	4.0	7.4	21.1
1999	1.7	8.1	4.0	7.7	21.5
2000	1.8	8.6	4.0	8.2	22.5
2001	2.0	9.0	3.8	8.7	23.5
2002	2.0	9.2	3.6	8.6	23.4
2003	2.0	8.9	3.8	9.4	24.0
2004	1.9	9.5	3.9	9.7	25.1
2005	1.6	9.6	3.9	10.4	25.4
2006	0.0	9.5	3.7	11.1	24.4
2007	0.0	10.1	3.8	12.0	25.8
2008	0.0	10.9	4.2	13.6	28.7
2009	0.0	10.0	4.2	13.0	27.2
2010	0.0	10.4	4.5	13.8	28.7

NEC Spine includes:

- Acela, Metroliner
- Regionals, NEDirect, Conventional
- Clockers (taken over by NJT end of FY05)
- Twilight Shoreliner (2001-2002) only
- Special trains in NE

Does not include "leap quarter" July-Sep 1976

The recession caused most services to decline from 2008 to 2009; NEC ridership had not fully recovered in 2010 and will come close to matching the record in 2011

TRAIN - MILES

Amtrak Train-Miles (millions)					
using consistent route groupings as defined in 2010					
from Amtrak Monthly Earnings Reports					
Fiscal Year	NEC Spine		Long Distance	State supported/ Short distance	System Total
	Clockers only	without Clockers			
1971					
1972					
1973					
1974					
1975					
1976					
1977	0.6	5.7	19.0	7.1	32.5
1978	0.5	5.6	18.2	7.3	31.5
1979	0.4	5.6	19.4	7.3	32.8
1980	0.4	6.1	15.2	8.2	29.8
1981	0.4	6.3	15.2	8.7	30.7
1982	0.3	5.8	14.4	8.1	28.7
1983	0.4	5.7	15.0	8.1	29.1
1984	0.4	6.0	15.2	7.5	29.0
1985	0.4	6.5	15.6	7.8	30.3
1986	0.3	6.5	15.4	6.9	29.1
1987	0.3	6.6	15.8	6.8	29.5
1988	0.3	6.9	16.1	6.8	30.2
1989	0.3	7.4	16.2	7.2	31.1
1990	0.3	7.6	16.8	8.4	33.0
1991	0.3	7.7	17.1	9.0	34.0
1992	0.3	7.6	17.3	9.3	34.5
1993	0.3	7.5	17.5	9.6	34.9
1994	0.3	7.7	16.6	9.8	34.3
1995	0.2	7.7	14.9	9.5	32.3
1996	0.2	7.2	13.5	9.0	29.8
1997	0.2	7.2	15.0	9.2	31.6
1998	0.2	7.5	15.4	9.6	32.8
1999	0.2	7.5	15.4	10.7	33.8
2000	0.2	7.8	15.7	11.5	35.1
2001	0.2	8.4	15.8	11.7	36.1
2002	0.2	9.5	15.7	12.1	37.5
2003	0.2	9.2	15.8	12.2	37.5
2004	0.2	9.2	15.6	12.2	37.2
2005	0.2	8.7	15.2	12.3	36.4
2006	0.0	8.6	14.6	12.5	35.8
2007	0.0	8.9	14.5	13.9	37.3
2008	0.0	9.1	14.6	13.9	37.7
2009	0.0	9.1	15.2	13.8	38.1
2010	0.0	9.0	15.2	14.4	38.6