



ON THE HILL

A Weekly Advocacy Update from TIA

The Latest News and Updates from TIA's Government Affairs Department



IN THIS ISSUE

HOUSE REPUBLICANS CRITICAL OF AMTRAK

DELTA PILOTS APPROVE POTENTIAL STRIKE

CA TAKES BOLD STEPS

Two House Republicans Critical of Amtrak

Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO) and Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR) – both are senior Republicans on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee – have asked Amtrak to justify giving top executives six-figure bonuses despite an overall decline in productivity from Amtrak. Passenger loss and declines in revenue apparently result in bonuses according to the two congressmen. During August, The New York Times claimed nine Amtrak employees received the largest bonus adding up to over \$200k for FY21. The CEO of Amtrak, Stephen Gardner got the biggest bonus coming out at \$293k.

Representatives Graves (T&I Ranking Member for the Full Committee) and Crawford (Railroads and Pipelines Subcommittee Ranking Member)

sent a letter insisting GOP oversight on Amtrak should Republicans take the majority back. Their letter, Graves and Crawford suggested the additional payouts to high-ranking executives seemed inappropriate given the poor performance of Amtrak and insulting to employees who rank lower on the hierarchy.

Given the inappropriate bonuses, both lawmakers have requested Amtrak provide criteria that was to be met to be eligible for the bonuses and the criteria required to achieve a bonus compares to those of other federal agencies.

Despite requests for information from Amtrak, Neither Rep. Crawford nor Graves have received a response. The original deadline was November 1st. Republicans are concerned that Amtrak's history with financial troubles and receding customer service support not only a significant reduction in bonuses given out, but federal funding as well. Amtrak is set to get \$66 billion over the next five years; the question is whether that is deserved and if it will improve Amtrak's product.

Delta Airline Pilots Green Light Potential Strike

On Monday, Delta Airlines' pilots voted to allow a strike if contract negotiations continued to fail. Negotiations to finalize an agreement have been ongoing since 2019. According to the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), 99% of the 96% of pilots present for the vote voted for the strike.

ALPA claims that there will be many more opportunities to reach a compromise before a strike ensues. Delta said it is confident that an agreement will be reached that is sufficient for both sides.

A timeline for the potential strike was not given, but the law requires mediation to continue until the mediator declares an 'impasse' after which a 30-day cooling off period begins. TIA Will keep you updated.

California Attempts Zero-Emission Trucks

Members of the California Air Resources Board held a hearing in Sacramento where they agreed to require all new trucks sold in the state to be zero-emission by 2036 rather than by 2040 they originally agreed to. In addition, they agreed to requiring fleet owners with 10 or more vehicles to operate with zero-emission trucks by 2045.

The board did not vote on the proposed rule change, that will be the subject of another public hearing before an official decision is made. To go forward, the plan must have the support of the White House and it is not clear what the White House thinks of the idea yet.

If this rule is passed, critics worry it will negatively affect capacity and further disrupt the supply chain. It also could start a nationwide movement among the blue states only accepting carbon-free trucks for business. Are companies able to make such a financial commitment to satisfy the climate wishes of a few states? Time will tell.