

C. MR. LEE KLING'S CONCURRING OPINION

☆ ☆ ☆ AMTRAK REFORM COUNCIL ☆ ☆ ☆

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February 4, 2002

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Mr. Gilbert E. Carmichael
Chairman
Amtrak Reform Council
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I came on to the Amtrak Reform Council with no preconceived thoughts concerning Amtrak, nor necessarily any specific actions to be taken. Thus, I believe I have been able to take an open-minded and constructive view of the issues confronting Amtrak and the Amtrak Reform Council.

In the past few years, I have heard a lot and learned a lot more about passenger rail, and Amtrak in particular.

With this in mind, I support the Amtrak Reform Council's findings and the recommendations in this report.

I do believe, however, that while this suggested plan has considerable merit, this might not be the only plan possible, and changes and modification in it or a completely different plan might be in order, depending on what actions Congress might take.

Regardless of Congressional actions, if Amtrak in any form is to be funded and continued, changes in its operating manner must be made. I mean by this that Amtrak must operate on a more businesslike basis with greater fiscal controls, restrictions, and more accountability, with better financial planning for capital and operations and improved marketing programs and direction - whenever appropriate, Amtrak should consider and implement privatization.

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Congress, in its deliberation, should seriously consider eliminating political involvement and allow decisions to be made on what best makes operational sense. A national rail system is in our national interest, and needs to be adequately funded, but without political influence on day to day operational aspects.

The Council report speaks to modern train sets, fast train sets and greater track availability to accomplish modernization. This is what is needed to give our populous a means of moving through our country in a safe, fast and comfortable environment and one that will serve our disadvantaged and disabled citizens, as well as our more affluent. Of course, our national defense is a factor not to be overlooked in this equation, as well as the need for a more multi model means of transportation.

Having said all this, much work has been done by the Council members, its executive director and the staff in order to offer this analysis and report.

The report offers a well thought out, documented recommendation for propelling a sound national rail system. At its best the report will be accepted in its entirety. At the least, it will be a document to help let the debate begin.

Respectfully submitted,
S. Lee Kling



Council member

* I did not vote for the finding in November only because I thought the timing of the finding was inappropriate—not the fact.