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Byrd's-Eye View  
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RESTORING THE CARDINAL

It has been a long, tough battle, but I am pleased that my efforts to resume operation of the Cardinal passenger train through southern and central West Virginia have been successful.

Legislation recently passed by the Congress, and signed into law by the President, instructs Amtrak to operate the Cardinal from Washington, D.C., to Chicago, via Cincinnati --the same route it formerly served.

I have been assured by Amtrak officials that this train service can be re-instituted by late January. The Cardinal was halted on Oct. 1 due to the Administration's budget cutbacks.

As the only through-state train service in West Virginia, the Cardinal provides a valuable means of transportation for thousands of West Virginians. It has scheduled stops in two of our major population centers -- Charleston and Huntington -- as well as White Sulphur Springs, Hinton, Prince, and Thurmond.

I worked for restoration of the Cardinal because I believe it was shortsighted to terminate this valuable train service, especially at this time.

For the last year that figures are available, ridership was up nearly 33 percent over the previous year, representing a significant increase in its popularity.



\* Also, despite our current energy glut, it is important to have an alternative means of transportation in case of another severe energy cutoff. In addition, train service provides reliable transportation for our mountainous state that can be difficult to navigate by car, ~~bus, or airplane~~ during severe weather disturbances.

I regret that Amtrak no longer operates a passenger train through the northern portion of our state, but the old Shenandoah train -- which was terminated on Oct. 1 -- did not have enough riders to justify its <sup>continued</sup> expense. The new Broadway Limited, ~~which replaced this route,~~ makes stops in Martinsburg and Harpers Ferry.

The Eastern Panhandle continues <sup>also</sup> to be served by the Blue Ridge, which has been re-authorized for the next two years. It runs between Washington, D.C., and Martinsburg and Harpers Ferry.

Passenger trains provide a valuable local and regional transportation service to the public and a valuable energy-saving service to the nation. <sup>They ARE</sup> ~~It is~~ an essential ingredient of an overall national transportation network.

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