



Potential PTC Red Flags

As PTC exemption was cited as a cause of the Southwest Chief bus bridge suspension plan, Amtrak may duplicate it elsewhere. Find below:

- I. **Unmet PTC Required segments with passenger service**
- II. **FRA Exempted PTC segments with passenger service**
- III. **The criteria for FRA PTC exemption**

I. Known problem areas where PTC is required, but not yet in place

- **SOUTHWEST CHIEF:** from the junction just west of Lamy, NM thru Albuquerque to Isleta, NM, (80 miles) mostly on the Rio Metro/Rail Runner line. The agency has made assurances that they will be exempted by the FRA before 1/1/19, and still have Santa Fe ATS (automatic train stop) available in the interim.*
- **Florida SILVER FLEET:** both the Deland--Sanford--Orlando--Kissimmee Sun Rail Commuter line and the West Palm Beach-Ft. Lauderdale-Miami Tri Rail Commuter line are not yet PTC-compliant and may not be by 12/31/18. Without these segments, all of the major Florida tourist destinations, including Disney World and Miami, will be left unserved.
- **EMPIRE SERVICE:** Metro North Hudson Line is still in testing phase but is on track to earn an extension.

*If this extension is denied Amtrak could bus Lamy-Albuquerque-Belen a roughly 90 mile/1 1/2 to 2 hour run instead of the 550 miles/12+ hours they propose to bus all the way from Dodge City, should PTC be the major factor.

II. Summary of PTC-exempt routes at risk

- **DOWNEASTER:** entire Pan Am Southern route north of Haverhill, Massachusetts to Brunswick, Maine.
- **VERMONTER:** entire Mass DOT/Pan Am Southern route north of Springfield, Massachusetts to St. Albans.
- **ETHAN ALLEN:** Whitehall, New York to Rutland, Vermont, along Pan Am Southern.
- **CARDINAL:** Charlottesville to Clifton Forge, and on segments on the west end in Indiana on CSX.
- **LAKESHORE:** the Norfolk Southern Lakefront Line past the Cleveland, Ohio station, Post Road Crossing to Rensselaer, New York and in the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority district east of Worcester.
- **CAPITOL LIMITED:** Norfolk Southern Lakefront line, as above in Cleveland.
- **TEXAS EAGLE:** sections of Union Pacific near Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

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- **EMPIRE BUILDER:** St. Paul to the northwest side of Minneapolis on the Minnesota Transfer along the Northstar Commuter line/BNSF.
- **CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR:** Union Pacific in western Colorado, from Grand Jct to Provo, Utah.
- **COAST STARLIGHT:** BNSF line north of Oakland, California.
- **SOUTHWEST CHIEF:** BNSF from La Junta, Colorado to Lamy, New Mexico. There are also segments between Newton and La Junta which are exempt.

NB: This is not a complete list. The association was verbally informed by Amtrak in April 2018 that 1100 miles of track had "issues".

Amtrak's Safety Review has promised to offer answers about these issues but has not yet filed a report as the deadline approaches. To frame the review's importance, consider that the Vermonter travels along the longest stretch of PTC Exempt un-signalled "Dark Territory" in the country: 118 miles St. Albans to White River Jct, and again for about 8 miles Brattleboro, Vermont to East Northfield, Massachusetts. The rest has CTC signals, but is also PTC exempt as per FRA requirements. If Amtrak requires action before January 1, 2019, stakeholders already would have needed to be informed; the Vermont legislature is now adjourned until January, 2019.

III. FRA exemption criteria

(c) Limited operations exception. FRA will consider an exception in the case of a track segment used for limited operations (operating in accordance with § 236.0 of this part) under one of the following sets of conditions:

(1) The trackage is used for limited operations by at least one passenger railroad subject to at least one of the following conditions:

(i) All trains are limited to restricted speed;

(ii) Temporal separation of passenger and other trains is maintained as provided in paragraph (e) of this section; or

(iii) Passenger service is operated under a risk mitigation plan submitted by all railroads involved in the joint operation and approved by FRA. The risk mitigation plan must be supported by a risk assessment establishing that the proposed mitigations will achieve a level of safety not less than the level of safety that would obtain if the operations were conducted under paragraph (c)(1) or (c)(2) of this section.

(2) Passenger service is operated on a segment of track of a freight railroad that is not a Class I railroad on which less than 15 million gross tons of freight traffic is transported annually and on which one of the following conditions applies:

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(i) If the segment is unsignaled and no more than four regularly scheduled passenger trains are operated during a calendar day, or

(ii) If the segment is signaled (e.g., equipped with a traffic control system, automatic block signal system, or cab signal system) and no more than 12 regularly scheduled passenger trains are operated during a calendar day.

(3) Not more than four passenger trains per day are operated on a segment of track of a Class I freight railroad on which less than 15 million gross tons of freight traffic is transported annually.

(d) A limited operations exception under paragraph (c) is subject to FRA review and approval. FRA may require a collision hazard analysis to identify hazards and may require that specific mitigations be undertaken. Operations under any such exception shall be conducted subject to the terms and conditions of the approval. Any main line track exclusion is subject to periodic review.

(e) Temporal separation. As used in this section, temporal separation means that limited passenger and freight operations do not operate on any segment of shared track during the same period and also refers to the processes or physical arrangements, or both, in place to ensure that temporal separation is established and maintained at all times. The use of exclusive authorities under mandatory directives is not, by itself, sufficient to establish that temporal separation is achieved. Procedures to ensure temporal separation shall include verification checks between passenger and freight operations and effective physical means to positively ensure segregation of passenger and freight operations in accordance with this paragraph.

(f) PTCSP requirement. No PTCSP - filed after the approval of a PTCIP with an MTEA - shall be approved by FRA unless it attests that no changes, except for those included in an FRA approved RFA, have been made to the information in the PTCIP and MTEA required by paragraph (b) or (c) of this section.

(g) Designation modifications. If subsequent to approval of its PTCIP or PTCSP the railroad seeks to modify which track or tracks should be designated as main line or not main line, it shall request modification of its PTCIP or PTCSP, as applicable, in accordance with § 236.1021.

[[75 FR 2699](#), Jan. 15, 2010, as amended at [75 FR 59117](#), Sept. 27, 2010]

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