

13. THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDS THAT CONNDOT CAREFULLY REVIEW THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY AND AMTRAK PROPOSALS REGARDING IMPROVEMENTS TO PENN STATION, WITH THE OBJECTIVE THAT SUFFICIENT OPERATIONAL CAPACITY FOR REASONABLE INCREASES IN NEW HAVEN LINE COMMUTER TRAINS AND AMTRAK INTERCITY PASSENGER TRAINS, ALONG WITH HIGH-SPEED INTERMODAL RAIL FREIGHT SERVICE, WILL BE PROVIDED.

The two single track rail tunnels under the Hudson River between New Jersey and Penn Station were constructed in 1910. At that time, four single track tunnels were also constructed under the East River. In recent years, significant increases in New Jersey Transit commuter trains have occurred. Also, all Amtrak Empire Service trains from the north use Penn Station. A doubling of Amtrak Northeast Corridor service to Boston will occur beginning in 2000. In addition, there is increased recognition that direct rail freight access along the Northeast Corridor is needed, rather than relying on circuitous access to New England via Albany. Connecticut should closely monitor the planning for these new services to ensure that we are not frozen out of any opportunity for expansions of New Haven Line commuter service. To the extent that it can influence such events, ConnDOT should also actively promote the prompt construction of a new rail tunnel (or tunnels) under the Hudson and East Rivers to expand capacity across the river for both passenger and freight service.