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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

RELEASED

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The Honorable James M. Collins
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Collins:

Pursuant to your request of December 21, 1972, we started an examination into the circumstances surrounding a decision by the Board of Directors of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (AMTRAK) to bypass the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, area on a proposed route establishing rail service between the United States and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. The route was to originate in St. Louis, Missouri; run through Little Rock and Texarkana, Arkansas; continue south through Longview, Valley Junction, Austin, and San Antonio, Texas; and end in Laredo, Texas. Chartered bus service was to be provided by AMTRAK as the final link between Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. 753

Shortly after our examination began, AMTRAK decided not to start operations on this route. Instead, service between the United States and Mexico is to be provided, at least for the present, on an alternate route originating in Fort Worth and terminating in Laredo. Beginning January 27, 1973, AMTRAK plans to run trains on the new route three times a week in each direction, with a basic train makeup of one coach and one coach-diner. Service south from Fort Worth is scheduled on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; service north from Laredo on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Intermediate stops are scheduled at McGregor, Temple, Austin, San Marcos, and San Antonio. As in the initially planned route, chartered bus service will link Laredo and Nuevo Laredo.

According to AMTRAK officials, the decision not to start service on the initially approved route was made because certain appropriated funds which AMTRAK believed it needed to operate over that route were being withheld by the Office of Management and Budget. AMTRAK officials stated further that there was considerable uncertainty as to when the funds might be obtained. The officials said that, even when the funds become available, they were not sure, at this time, which of the possible routes might be finally selected.

In view of the change in AMTRAK plans since your request, agreement was reached with your office on January 17, 1973, to terminate our work on this matter pending future developments and a request from you for further assistance.

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We do not plan to distribute this report further unless you agree or publicly announce its contents.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James B. Roberts". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Comptroller General
of the United States