



*Our Vision: The NGEC will provide national leadership in standardization, acquisition, and management of passenger rail equipment.*

### Section 305 Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC)

**Monthly Activities Report: January 31, 2022**

**Submitted By: Steven J Hewitt, Program Manager, S305 NGEC**

**Public law 110-432 required Amtrak to:**

*...establish a Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee, comprised of representatives of Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, host freight railroad companies, passenger railroad equipment manufacturers, interested States, and as appropriate, other passenger railroad operators.*

*"The purpose of the Committee shall be to design, develop specifications for, and procure standardized next-generation corridor equipment.*

*(b) Functions – the Committee may –*

- 1) Determine the number of different types of equipment required, considering variations in operational needs and corridor infrastructure.*
- 2) Establish a pool of equipment to be used on corridor routes funded by participating states; and*
- 3) Subject agreements between Amtrak and States, utilize services provided by Amtrak to design, maintain and remanufacture equipment."*

#### **Executive Board**

**Chair: Ray Hessinger, NYSDOT**

**Vice Chair: George Hull, Amtrak**

**Secretary: John Oimoen, IDOT**

**Treasurer: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak**

**The Executive Board holds bi-weekly conference calls – Tuesdays at 11:30am Eastern**

During the month of January 2022, the Executive Board met twice via web conference, on the 11th and the 25th.

Highlights, decisions, and action items from the month of January 2022 include:

- Treasurer's Report – 1-25-22:

Balance/ Spend Rate:

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.

Amount Spent through October 2021: \$865,727.22

Balance remaining: \$ 384,272.78

Estimated spend at current rate for the remaining grant period (through 9-30-23): \$307,193.53

Current Spend Rate per month (as info and used in calculating): \$13,963.34

Estimated Balance at the end of the Extension Period (Contingency): \$77,079.25 (this would carry the NGEC about 5 months beyond the end of the grant period)

- 2022 NGEC two-pager:

On 1-11-22, the 2022 NGEC two-page educational document was approved, and distribution has begun. To date 320 electronic copies have been sent out. Hard copies are now available by request sent to Steve Hewitt [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com). Hard copies will be distributed to all in-person attendees at the NGEC annual Meeting on w-25-22.

- Annual By-Law Review/Update:

The 2021 Annual Review of the NGEC By-Laws was completed in November 2021 and proposed changes were adopted by the Executive Board. The updated By-Laws were distributed to Board members and posted to the NGEC website.

The 2022 Annual review will be scheduled by the NGEC Finance and Administrative subcommittee.

- Follow ups on developing a plan to increase NGEC awareness as of 1-25-22:

Tim Ziethen reported that he has had another follow-up conversation with Michael Alexis, Amtrak Deputy General Counsel, and an exchange of emails with him.

Michael has been assigned to the NGEC for any legal questions or related issues.

Michael provided Tim Ziethen with guidance on issues related to the NGEC's ability to take steps to increase awareness of the Committee and the work that it does.

In general, the guidance is that posting factual information on the website is permitted providing that the Committee follows Amtrak contractor promotion policies which the Committee has been following. For posting on social media, again, the NGEC would be permitted to do it as long as it follows the Amtrak policies. None of this is new, the NGEC has always lived up to these policies.

Issuing Press releases would also be permissible as long as it transmits simply factual information.

Using paid advertising or attending trade shows would require By-Law changes and there would be an issue of spending funds for these activities as they would need to be paid outside the grant.

As noted previously, the NGEC should not proactively communicate with Congress due to "lobbying" issues but can respond with factual information in compliance with Amtrak contractor promotion policy upon request.

Tim Ziethen will provide Steve Hewitt with a summary of the guidance that Michael Alexis provided to him so that it can be entered into the record.

- Update – Multi-State Rail Car Procurement (provided by Caltrans) as of 1-25-22:

The Cab Carshell final design has been approved and the cab structures are in production. Remaining Cab Car FDRs are in the final submittal and review stage and the cab car clearance information has been submitted to Amtrak. IDOT Café Car FDRs are in the closure stage and Galley open items are being addressed.

The Cab Car Collision and Corner Post Appendix F testing is complete, and the test report is to be submitted in February. The cab car compression test report review is complete, and Siemens is reviewing comments. FAIs will continue for café and cab car subsystems.

102 cars are in production or have been produced at Siemens Sacramento Facility. IDOT and Caltrans cars are being prepared for Conditional Acceptance and revenue service while open items and relevant FMIs are being addressed.

4 cars are in test this month in the Midwest and are attached to current consists. Testing includes IT related items and the passenger information system.

John Oimoen, IDOT, announced that new Venture cars will be put into revenue service for the Lincoln service next week. This is great news!

- Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Equipment as of 1-25-22:

Metro-North and Siemens have formally closed the Initial Design Review and Siemens has begun submitting input for the Preliminary Design Review and it is anticipated that this process should conclude in February or early March 2022.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Update – as of 1-25-22:

On the Acela: progress is being made for verification from FRA.

On the Long Distance (Charger) Locomotives: two have been conditionally accepted and are in Chicago for testing. Two are in Wilmington and two are shipping to Wilmington today (1-6-22). It is anticipated that the first two could be entered into revenue service in early February 2022.

On the Intercity Trainset: Initial Design Review is underway.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement as of 1-25-22:

This procurement remains in the “cone of silence” period.

- VIA Rail Equipment Procurements:

On 2-23-21 at the Annual Meeting a comprehensive overview/update of the VIA Rail procurement was presented.

The next comprehensive update will take place at the NGEC Annual Meeting 2-25-22.

VIA Rail representatives have agreed to attend the NGEC Annual Meeting virtually and give a presentation on the progress of its passenger rail procurement.

- Document Control Update - as of 12-31-21:

Tammy Krause provided the following update for inclusion in today’s minutes (1-25-22):

“I have been continuing to meet weekly with the Technical Writer on the Trainset specification changes and the DMU specification changes. The trainset updated specification is completed and was given to Steve Hewitt for issuing as needed. The DMU changes are currently in process. The current leader of the Electronics on Trains WG is no longer able to fulfill that role. I will be meeting with that WG later today and looking for a replacement.”

Tammy Krause also reiterated that she was participating on the Electronics on Trains working group later today (1-25-22) and was hoping to be able to name a team leader. (David Brabb was no longer available to stay on as team leader.)

- DMU Revision A – Status:

On 1-11-22, the Executive Board accepted the DMU Review Panel’s Report and Recommendations and formally adopted 305-009 DMU Specification Revision A. The Technical writer is in the process of finalizing the document with all approved changes.

- Updates: States and Amtrak – Charger Locomotive and Rail Car Experience:

In-depth updates were provided during the 2021 Annual Meeting and were distributed to NGEC members and can be found on the NGEC website.

Updates on the Charger Locomotives experience will be provided during the 2022 NGEC Annual Meeting scheduled for 2-25-22 in Washington, DC

- Exploring/confirming funding options beyond 9-30-2023:

On 10-5-21, Mike Murray, FRA, reported that the FRA is looking at options and briefing leadership in the Office of Railroad Policy and Development. This will take a couple of months and Mike suggested that the Board not carry this as an agenda item for the bi-weekly meetings as it will take some time. When he has more information, he will let the Board know.

Tim Ziethen reported that he has reached out to Ken Altman, Amtrak Government Affairs to follow-up with him on previous discussions that an option could be Amtrak funding the NGEC through its grant. It was the general thinking that this would be a possibility as the NGEC was included as a potential type of recipient in the overall Amtrak grant request. Tim will report back once he hears from Ken Altman.

Ray Hessinger suggested that the FASC follow these issues and keep this on their monthly agenda, and report back to the NGEC Executive Board as more information is forthcoming.

The NGEC will explore potential grant opportunities and potential appropriations requests for funding beyond 2023.

On 1-25-22, Mike Murray, FRA, reported that there was no decision forthcoming at this point, but he expected to have one by the Annual Meeting.

- Preparing for the NGEC Annual Meeting 2022:

Review DRAFT agenda – confirm speakers:

Steve Hewitt gave an overview of the current DRAFT Annual Meeting Agenda and asked for confirmation as to who will give the presentations covered under each to agenda item.

Kyle Gradinger confirmed that he will provide the Caltrans update on the Multi state passenger rail car procurement. He was not set on who from Caltrans will provide the update on California's experience with the Charger Locomotive.

George Hull noted that he has not finalized who will give the Amtrak updates, but that Steve Hewitt can leave him listed for now.

Mike Murray let Steve Hewitt know that he hopes to have, by Friday, 1-28-22, the name of the FRA representative who will give the FRA update.

Reaffirm Board member attendance (in-person or virtually)

Steve Hewitt reviewed the registration list and noted that in-person attendance, especially by states is pending travel approval. Currently there are 42 members of the NGEC who intend to participate in person and 23 who intend to participate virtually.

Steve Hewitt also urged members to reserve their hotel room asap as the Room Block closes on 1-31-22. Thus far the list of those who have reserved rooms is very low.

Logistics review

There is a meeting later today with the various organizations meeting in DC the week of 2-22-22 (SPRC, SAIPRC, AASHTO and the NGEC) and anything new will be brought back to the members.

Timeline for presentations to be submitted:

Steve Hewitt asked for presentations to be provided to him by COB on 2-18-22.

AV costs

Since this is the first time the NGEC has held a Hybrid meeting, it is difficult to assess the AV costs which are coming in quite high. There simply is not much to compare with it. Steve will be talking to the meeting planner next week and will try to get a better understanding of those costs. In the meantime, Tim Ziethen will look at what the overall costs were the last time the NGEC met in-person.

Ray Hessinger asked Steve Hewitt to set up a “quick” call with the nominating committee (Ray Hessinger, John Oimoen and Mike Jenkins) for next week – either on 2-3-22 or 2-4-22 in between other NGEC calls if possible.

- Establishing Priorities and developing updated work plan for 2022:

On 12-28-21, Chairman Hessinger confirmed the following priorities for 2022:

Review/update NGEC Reference and Drawings series 305-900 and 305-800.

Review/Update the Bi-level specification currently in Revision C.4. With Amtrak looking at using some of the funding from the new IJA for its western fleet, it makes sense for the NGEC to review and update the Bi-Level car specification.

Review the car body materials issue from a broader perspective for all NGEC equipment not only DMUs. Ray would like to take a look at developing a consistent approach for all of the NGEC vehicle specifications.

Review “emerging technologies”: On the last technical subcommittee call (12-9-21) the topic of emerging technologies for propulsion was raised. Ray believes that the technical subcommittee should conduct a scan of the industry regarding emerging technologies for propulsion and how they relate to the NGEC.

Review and consider using the Metro-North Dual Mode Locomotive Specification organizational changes to determine if they should be adopted by the NGEC and applied across the board to all NGEC specifications. This would be an administrative change not impacting technical content of any of the specifications and could be resolved by the Executive Board.

At the NGEC Annual Meeting, Tammy Krause, Document Control Manager, is asked to provide a progress report on activities and accomplishments from Document Control over the past year and to provide an action plan for the year ahead which should be based on the priorities as identified by the Chair.

- TRB question regarding future – next generation equipment needs:

Ray Hessinger noted that on the last Technical subcommittee call held on 1-20-22, a member of the industry who is also involved with a TRB committee asked if the NGEC had needs for research for the next generation of equipment.

Ray noted that, at this time the NGEC is looking at possibly updating the primer prepared by the Locomotive Task Force early in the NGEC’s history. Dave Warner will be providing a presentation during the Annual Meeting on zero emissions propulsion – a then and now look, and this should set the stage or kick off that effort.

As for now, as long as the Committee does not move into areas beyond where we have gone before such as higher speed rail, there is no immediate need for additional research. However, he did add “we will see where we go after Dave Warner’s presentation.”

George Hull mentioned updating the trainset specification now that it has been re-formatted consistent with the other PRIIA specifications. Ray responded that the specification is available and updates through the NGEC DCR process are welcome and is exactly what we want to do as an organization and very appropriate.

### **Technical subcommittee**

**Chair: George Hull, Amtrak**

**Vice Chair: Joe Paul, Amtrak**

### **The Technical subcommittee holds bi-weekly conference calls on Thursdays at 3:00pm Eastern**

During the month of January 2022, the NGEC Technical Subcommittee met twice – on the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Key decisions and action item updates from the month of January 2022, included:

- Backgrounder educational document:

The 2022 NGEC two-page educational document/handout is now available in electronic or hard copy versions. Requests should be sent to Steve Hewitt at [shewitt109@aol.com](mailto:shewitt109@aol.com)

- Document Control Update as of 1-31-22:

See update in the Executive Board section of this report.

Update: Electronics on Trains working group activities:

Team Leader David Brabb resigned his position due to a job change. Tammy Krause, Document Control Manager was to attend the next call (1-25-22) to assist in naming a new team leader and get a sense of the ongoing and planned activities of the group. She is also asked to ensure that NGEC procedures are being followed.

- Multi-State Car Procurement - Caltrans (Lead State): Progress reports from the lead state on the PRIIA multi-state car procurement is provided on each technical subcommittee call and each Executive Board call.

See the update provided in the Executive Board section of this report.

- Metro North Dual Mode Locomotive Procurement:

See the update provided in the Executive Board section of this report.

- Amtrak Equipment Procurement Updates: Progress reports are provided by AMTRAK CMO and NGEC Vice Chair George Hull on a regular basis.

See the update provided in the Executive Board section of this report.

- Connecticut DOT Rail Car Procurement:

See the update provided in the Executive Board section of this report.

- University of Nebraska study on High Speed wireless technology as of 10-31-21:

Hamid reported that work is continuing with the results of propagation modeling on the 160Mega Hertz channel and performance modeling on different channels including propagation and velocity in different rail environments (such as going through tunnels). Two abstracts have been produced and will be presented.

For any questions or more information, please contact Hamid Sharif-Kashani at [hamidSharif@UNL.edu](mailto:hamidSharif@UNL.edu).

There were no updates provided on this study during the month of January 2022.

- Working Group on Specification Weight Issues as of 1-31-22:

There was nothing new to report on the activities of this working group in January 2022. It was scheduled to meet during the last week in January and report on its activities during the NGEC Technical subcommittee call scheduled for 2-3-22.

### **The Finance and Administrative Subcommittee**

**Chair: Tim Ziethen, Amtrak**

**Vice Chair: Brian Beeler II, NNEPRA for Maine DOT**

**Second Vice Chair: John Oimoen, Illinois DOT**

**The Finance and Administrative subcommittee (FASC) will hold a conference call every four weeks on Wednesdays at 3:00pm Eastern.**

During the Month of January 2022, the Finance and Administrative Subcommittee met on 1-5-22:

- Treasurer's Report :

Total Initial Grant Amount: \$1,250,000.

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Follow up Discussion regarding future funding options beyond 9-30-2023:

Mike Murray, FRA, had reported to the Executive Board on 10-5-21 that the FRA is looking at options and briefing leadership in the Office of Railroad Policy and Development. This will take a couple of months and Mike suggested that the Board not carry this as an agenda item for the bi-weekly meetings as it will take some time. When he has more information, he will let the Board know. Ray Hessinger suggested, at that time, that this information be reported to the FASC on its next call (today) and that the FASC keep track of it.

On today's call, Mike Murray reiterated that it would take several months and that he does not feel it should be discussed on every call. It was agreed that once FRA has a response Mike Murray will report it to either the Executive Board or the FASC whichever meets first.

Tim Ziethen reported that he has reached out to Ken Altman, Amtrak Government Affairs, and Tim has confirmed that Amtrak is supportive of the work of the Committee (NGEC) and that funding through either Amtrak or FRA are the best options, but other options could also be explored.

For now, this item will be carried as an open item to be tabled until such time as additional information is forthcoming.

There was nothing new to report on this item in January 2022 other than that an answer is expected to be forthcoming by the NGEC Annual Meeting.

- Conveying the message as of 1-31-22:

The 2022 NGEC two-pager is now available as reported in the Executive Board section of this report

- Quarterly Grant Agreement Progress Report to FRA

All reports this year have been submitted on time. The next report will be for the period ending 12-31-21 and will be due to FRA on 1-31-22.

- Follow ups on developing a plan to increase NGEC awareness as of 1-25-22:

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Tim Ziethen will provide Steve Hewitt with a summary of the guidance that Michael Alexis provided to him so that it can be entered into the record.

#### **NGEC Specification Review Panel(s):**

**For each PRIIA NGEC specification a Review Panel has been established to compare the specification (as developed by the technical subcommittee) against a Requirements document previously adopted by the Executive Board. As the Review Panel completes its work, it prepares a report with recommendations. This report is submitted to the Executive Board for its consideration. Once accepted by the Board, the specification is subsequently formally adopted by the Executive Board. As part of the Document Control process, any proposed revisions to a PRIIA NGEC specification must go through the Review Panel process as well. At such times, the Review Panel, previously established for a specification, is re-convened by the Executive Board chair.**

The DMU Specification Review panel met on 12-13-21 and approved the Review Panel Report with Recommendations for submittal to the NGEC Executive Board. On 12-28-21, the Board was given an overview of the report and on 1-11-22 the Board accepted the Report and its Recommendations and adopted DMU Specification Revision A.