



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

*Mr Henry
13065*

HUMAN RESOURCES
DIVISION

NOV 9 1979

B-164031(4)

The Honorable William P. Adams
Chairman, Railroad Retirement Board
844 Rush Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

*EDG 01/86
AGC 00253*

Dear Mr. Adams:

SEN 00300

At the request of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, we reviewed selected travel policies and practices of your agency. This letter confirms our discussion with your Chief Executive Officer and the corrective action he plans or will consider regarding our findings.

TRAVEL COSTS INCREASE SHARPLY

Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) travel costs increased from \$568,000 in fiscal year 1976 to \$794,000 in 1979 and are projected to reach \$944,000 in 1980. Most of the increase was for headquarters' travel, whose costs more than doubled. Regional costs increased 23 percent. RRB travel costs exceeded the amounts approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Congress by \$31,000 in 1976, \$35,000 in 1977, \$135,000 in 1978, and \$205,000 in 1979.

RRB costs increased sharply while the Congress, the President, and OMB called for holding them down. In May 1978, OMB issued Bulletin No. 78-13 with several recommendations on how to minimize unnecessary travel costs and eliminate nonessential travel. In September 1978, the President directed agencies to cut administrative travel costs by 20 percent. Also, in passing the continuing resolution for fiscal year 1980, the Congress directed a \$500 million Government-wide reduction in travel expenditures. In addressing its current travel cost problems, RRB is now considering implementing some of the OMB recommendations.

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PLANS FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION

The Chief Executive Officer recognizes that RRB controls over travel costs need improvement. Specifically, he agreed to take the following actions we recommended to control travel costs:

- Assess the need for certain travel and the number of attendees at certain meetings.
- Limit use of first-class air travel and require you or your deputy to authorize or approve such travel.
- Establish a system to assure full advantage is taken of excursion rates, discount fares, and items such as airline discount coupons.
- Stress greater use of GSA vehicles instead of privately owned vehicles for official travel.
- Consider limiting the amount allowed for meals and miscellaneous subsistence when travel is on an actual cost basis.
- Consider limiting the use of blanket travel orders.
- Establish a system for more closely monitoring actual with budgeted travel expenditures.

As agreed, you will inform the Senate Committee on Appropriations by December 31, 1979, on details of your actions to better control travel costs. Please send us a copy of your letter.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by RRB personnel during our work.

Sincerely yours,

Edward A. Bensmore, Jr.

PA
Philip A. Bernstein
Acting Director