



HIGH GREEN



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Hippos Returning to the NEC



Amtrak photo

Amtrak “Hippos” near return as cab cars

Amtrak’s retired HHP8 electric locomotives — nicknamed “Hippos” during their relatively short operating life — are nearing their return to service as cab cars. The company operated crew-familiarization specials between New York and Wilmington, Del., on April 7-8, and will reportedly operate more this week.

Fifteen of the Bombardier-Alstom locomotives were delivered in 2001 and retired by 2015 after a career marked by reliability issues. Amtrak began testing the depowered locomotives in a cab-car role in 2023. The converted locomotives will allow Amtrak to retire or bolster its fleet of ex-Metroliner cab cars for the increased use of push-pull service on the corridor. *Trains, April 14, 2025 via Alex Mayes*

Ed. Note: The returning “Hippos” have a much more colorful paint scheme. Alex adds: “The above photo is what they looked like in July 2007. A southbound Amtrak Regional train approaches the Bowie State University MARC station on the Northeast Corridor on July 31, 2007. Leading the eight-car train is 8,000-HP HHP-8 No. 662, one of 15 such electric locomotives that Amtrak purchased from Bombardier-Alstom in 1996. In conjunction with this order, MARC ordered six HHP-8s. Amtrak’s HHP-8s reportedly suffered from low reliability. After only one decade in service, their replacement was considered, concurrent with the replacement of the older AEM-7 locomotive fleet. In October 2010, Amtrak ordered 70 Siemens ACS-64 locomotives to replace both the HHP-8 and the older AEM-7 locomotives.”