

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 146 Session of
2009

INTRODUCED BY MUSTO, JULY 6, 2009

REFERRED TO TRANSPORTATION, JULY 6, 2009

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to
2 conduct a study of the feasibility of providing passenger
3 rail service between Wilkes-Barre and Scranton in conjunction
4 with the proposed restoration of passenger rail service
5 between Scranton and New York City.

6 WHEREAS, In a letter to the President of the United States
7 dated April 21, 2009, United States Senators Robert P. Casey,
8 Jr., and Arlen Specter, together with Senators Charles E.
9 Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, announced their support to
10 restore passenger rail service from Binghamton, New York,
11 through Scranton, to New York City; and

12 WHEREAS, Amtrak has agreed to conduct a feasibility study of
13 the Scranton to New York City link, known as the Lackawanna
14 Cutoff project; and

15 WHEREAS, In June 2009, the United States Environmental
16 Protection Agency declared a finding of no significant impact
17 for a new passenger rail line between Morris County, New Jersey,
18 and Scranton, a vital section of the Lackawanna Cutoff; and

19 WHEREAS, This two-decade-long effort to restore rail service
20 from the Poconos region to New York City therefore appears to be

1 nearing the engineering and construction funding phase; and

2 WHEREAS, Several extensions of this service have already been
3 proposed and are being seriously considered, including north to
4 Binghamton, New York; and

5 WHEREAS, A previously commissioned, federally funded study
6 conducted by the Redevelopment Authority of Luzerne County
7 determined that the physical track alignment is already in place
8 to do so, thus requiring no additional right-of-way; and

9 WHEREAS, The citizens of Luzerne County deserve the same
10 consideration and opportunity for employment, as well as other
11 economic opportunities that would be afforded to the
12 municipalities that the passenger line would serve, as it is now
13 proposed; and

14 WHEREAS, Establishing passenger service between Wilkes-Barre
15 and Scranton could also benefit economic development efforts in
16 the greater Hazleton area should service eventually be extended
17 to that region; and

18 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania would be remiss in not determining if
19 the continuation of this rail service on to Wilkes-Barre is
20 feasible at this pivotal juncture, especially considering the
21 relatively short distance and minimal expense incurred in doing
22 so; therefore be it

23 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Legislative Budget and
24 Finance Committee to conduct a study to determine if the
25 benefits outweigh the costs of providing passenger rail service
26 from Wilkes-Barre to Scranton in conjunction with the Lackawanna
27 Cutoff project; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
29 study include a review of the:

30 (1) Alignment and trackage necessary to provide

1 passenger rail service between Wilkes-Barre and Scranton.

2 (2) Preferred ownership and management structure and
3 operational requirements to provide such service.

4 (3) Anticipated ridership for Wilkes-Barre to Scranton
5 passenger rail service;

6 and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the committee issue its report to the
8 Secretary of the Senate within one year from the date of
9 adoption of this resolution.