

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 322 Session of
1996

INTRODUCED BY GEIST, ZUG, SCHULER, SATHER, CORRIGAN, HASTE, SAYLOR, COY, WAUGH, TANGRETTI, McGEEHAN, COWELL, DIGIROLAMO, STAIRS, JOSEPHS, FAIRCHILD, CAPPABIANCA, SANTONI, PESCI, FICHTER, DEMPSEY, MAITLAND, ITKIN, SHANER, MANDERINO, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, ROBERTS, ROONEY, S. H. SMITH, ARGALL, STABACK, SCHRODER, RUDY, BUNT, J. TAYLOR, STERN, WALKO, DERMODY, YOUNGBLOOD, COLAIZZO, MILLER, DeLUCA, PISTELLA, PETTIT, GIGLIOTTI, READSHAW, LYNCH, TIGUE, M. N. WRIGHT, HESS, HERMAN, NAILOR, PLATTS, FLICK, ROBINSON, MARSICO, STURLA, ROEBUCK, FAJT, BAKER, CURRY, HALUSKA, DRUCE, RUBLEY, KENNEY, COLAFELLA, CLYMER, LUCYK, MARKOSEK, MELIO, McCALL, B. SMITH, BUXTON, RAYMOND, TRUE, BEBKO-JONES, FARGO, ROHRER, TRELLO, STRITTMATTER, DONATUCCI, NYCE, STETLER, E. Z. TAYLOR, FARMER, RAMOS, L. I. COHEN, LAUGHLIN, LEH, BOSCOLA AND BELFANTI, MARCH 26, 1996

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
MARCH 26, 1996

A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating April 13, 1996, as the 150th anniversary of the
2 charter establishing the Pennsylvania Railroad.

3 WHEREAS, On April 13, 1846, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 by act of the General Assembly granted a provisional charter to
5 a new corporation requiring that it make substantial progress in
6 constructing a railroad from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh in 15
7 months' time; and

8 WHEREAS, Failure to do so would forfeit the charter in favor
9 of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; and

10 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad met the challenge in July
11 1847; and

1 WHEREAS, The completion of the railroad fulfilled the dream
2 of Colonel John Stevens, who in 1823 was unsuccessful in
3 financing a railroad which he planned eventually to connect
4 Philadelphia with Pittsburgh, Ohio and the Great Lakes and New
5 Jersey and New York City; and

6 WHEREAS, Many persons believed canals more practical and
7 steam railroads not to be viable; and

8 WHEREAS, Merchants of Philadelphia and other concerned
9 Pennsylvanians, fearing Pennsylvania's lost dominance in western
10 trade, helped finance what many believed to be a risky
11 undertaking; and

12 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad rose from its modest
13 beginnings to surpass all of its earlier founded competitors to
14 become the United States' first billion-dollar corporation,
15 earning its title, Standard Railroad of the World; and

16 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad held the record for the
17 longest unbroken string of payment of stock dividends in United
18 States history, paying dividends during each year of the
19 company's existence; and

20 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad, for much of its 121-year
21 life span, was the largest railroad in mileage, passengers and
22 freight in the world, bringing the Commonwealth pride, commerce
23 and employment; and

24 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad's 28,000 miles of track
25 could have circled the earth if laid end-to-end; and

26 WHEREAS, The railroad was a critical troop transport and
27 supply line during the Civil War, World War I and World War II;
28 and

29 WHEREAS, The Mifflintown Sentinel and Republican newspaper
30 once said the railroad was "in fact, the great national highway

1 to the west"; and

2 WHEREAS, The railroad's research and development led to many
3 engineering and technological advances of the industrial age
4 through laboratories located in Altoona, Pennsylvania; and

5 WHEREAS, The Allegheny Mountains were conquered by the
6 railroad's engineering marvel, the Horseshoe Curve; and

7 WHEREAS, This linchpin linked Pittsburgh and the west with
8 the port of Philadelphia and averaged approximately one train
9 every two minutes, 24 hours a day during World War II; and

10 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad was more than a railroad;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Fortune Magazine in 1936 said the railroad had
13 larger revenues and wider boundaries than the nations of Turkey
14 and Uruguay; and

15 WHEREAS, The article reported that the railroad owned,
16 controlled or operated "not merely locomotives and cars and
17 tracks and stations, but also ferry boats and tug boats and
18 derricks and wharves and snowsheds and bridges and grain
19 elevators and power plants and a telephone system and sewer
20 companies and city lots and coal mines and timberland and
21 commissaries and car factories and locomotive factories and
22 brass foundries and iron foundries and machine shops and water
23 reservoirs and planing mills and hotels and a chain of YMCA's
24 and fleets of trucks and an oil-mixing plant and stockyards and
25 pasture land and dwellings and laboratories and traveling cranes
26 and trestles and tunnels and ice plants and hook-and-ladders and
27 a million other things"; and

28 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad was the first railroad to
29 adopt automatic air brakes as standard equipment; and

30 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad was responsible for the

1 creation of the city of Altoona and the "Main Line" communities
2 in suburban Philadelphia; and

3 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad created the world's
4 largest freight classification yard in Enola, Cumberland County,
5 and later surpassed this in the 1950's at Conway, Beaver County;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad gave this Commonwealth
8 many outstanding citizens including Andrew Carnegie, J. Edgar
9 Thomson, Samuel V. Merrick, Alexander Cassatt, Samuel Rea and
10 Thomas A. Scott; and

11 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad brought us the great four-
12 track Broad Way of Commerce and electrification of what is now
13 Amtrak's Northeast Corridor; and

14 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad was known for famous
15 passenger trains, such as the Broadway Limited, the Red Arrow,
16 the General, the Pennsylvania Limited, the "Spirit of St.
17 Louis," the Congressional Limited and the Metroliner; and

18 WHEREAS, The official steam locomotive of Pennsylvania, the
19 K-4 Pacific class and the official electric locomotive of
20 Pennsylvania, the GG-1, were products of the Pennsylvania
21 Railroad's Juniata Shops; and

22 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad keystone symbol and
23 products containing it, both new and old, continue to be the
24 most purchased, traded and collected items of any railroad past
25 or present; therefore be it

26 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
27 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania commemorate April 13, 1996, as the
28 150th anniversary of the founding of the Pennsylvania Railroad;
29 and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge all of the

1 Commonwealth's citizens to reflect upon the legacy of this great
2 railroad; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to
4 the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, The Altoona
5 Railroaders Memorial Museum, the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical
6 and Historical Society and The National Railway Historical
7 Society.