A RESOLUTION

Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, PENNSYLVANIA TURNPIKE COMMISSION, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, to conduct a study for the potential of a hyperloop system that would run from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with a stop in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as well as a northeast extension that would operate between Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, People have been dreaming of high-speed travel in tubes, including in vacuum, for more than a century; and

WHEREAS, Elon Musk, the CEO of the aerospace firm SpaceX, as well as Tesla, first described his idea for the futuristic transportation system in August 2013; and

WHEREAS, The concept of a hyperloop seemed hypothetical at the time, but, a handful of states and firms are currently competing to develop the necessary technologies and to study the feasibility of this system; and

WHEREAS, While it is understood that many engineering and regulatory hurdles must be addressed before the technology is ready for paying customers, the Commonwealth cannot stand idly
by as surrounding states put resources toward making this hypothetical concept a reality; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, transportation agencies in the Columbus, Ohio, region and in Illinois announced they would cosponsor a $1.2 million study of a hyperloop connecting Columbus, Ohio, to Chicago, Illinois, thus cutting the 350-mile journey to just 30 minutes; and

WHEREAS, The hyperloop would also connect Columbus, Ohio, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, It is the fourth public study of the transportation mode to be recently undertaken; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, Elon Musk, founder of The Boring Company, announced that his company received verbal government approval to build a hyperloop connecting New York City, New York, to Washington, DC, with a projected travel time of 29 minutes and planned stops in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore, Maryland; and

WHEREAS, This Commonwealth has a rich history in regards to transportation; and

WHEREAS, In 1791, the General Assembly approved a Statewide transportation plan, and one year later created the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike Road Company; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Turnpike officially entered service in 1940 as the first of its kind, spanning just 160 miles from Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to Irwin, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, the Pennsylvania Turnpike spans 552 miles, serves an average of 550,000 motorists a day traveling a total of 5.7 billion miles annually; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad also played a significant role in the development of this Commonwealth; and
WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Railroad was established and headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1846, and was the largest railroad by traffic and revenue in the United States for the first half of the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, At one time, the Pennsylvania Railroad was the largest publicly traded corporation in the world, with a budget larger than that of the United States Government and a workforce of about 250,000 individuals; and

WHEREAS, There has not been a major new form of transportation in 100 years, especially one that is ultrafast, on demand, direct, emission-free, energy-efficient and quiet, and has a smaller footprint than other high-speed transportation modes; and

WHEREAS, A growing global economy requires faster, cheaper, safer and more efficient transportation methods which tend to be more of a mix of expensive, slow and environmentally harmful; and

WHEREAS, These emergent transportation systems need to be studied to fully understand the capabilities and feasibility of each; and

WHEREAS, Hyperloop transportation has the capability to move freight and people quickly, safely, on demand and direct from origin to destination at two to three times faster than high-speed rail and magnetic levitation trains and 10 to 15 times faster than traditional rail via electric propulsion through a low pressure tube; and

WHEREAS, The hyperloop vehicle floats above the track using magnetic levitation and glides for long distances due to ultra-low aerodynamic drag; and

WHEREAS, Pods accelerate until they reach a speed where they
levitate, like a boat moving along the water; and

WHEREAS, A series of vacuum pumps removes much of the tube's air, to the point where the atmosphere is similar to being 200,000 feet above sea level; and

WHEREAS, While traditional trains are limited by friction, both against the air ahead and the ground beneath, hyperloop drastically reduces friction in both of these areas; and

WHEREAS, Companies such as Virgin Hyperloop One and Hyperloop Transportation Technologies have undertaken the challenge of turning a hyperloop into a reality; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth has an opportunity to further benefit from hyperloop technology by leveraging corporate and institutional talent and resources to participate in the research and development of the technology, and the supply chain needed to produce and construct hyperloop corridors; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize Pennsylvania's role as a leader in the field of transportation and direct the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to authorize to contract with an independent, third party which is currently involved in a similar study; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the PENNSYLVANIA TURNPIKE COMMISSION, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, to conduct a study for the potential of a hyperloop system that would run from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with a stop in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as well as a northeast extension that would operate between Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Pennsylvania; and be it further

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RESOLVED, That this contracted entity be a fully integrated professional and technical service firm positioned to design, build, finance and operate infrastructure assets around the world for public and private sectors; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee or its contractor be authorized to assemble and subcontract with academic institutions in this Commonwealth that are acknowledged, recognized and capable leaders within the transportation industry; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the study examine the potential for a hyperloop system that would run from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with a stop in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as well as a northeast extension that would operate between Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Pennsylvania, while considering the geographical barriers to the most optimal route; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the study identify new economic and social opportunities for companies and citizens in this Commonwealth; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the study develop findings and recommendations on the potential impact that a hyperloop system would have on the established rail and aviation systems throughout this Commonwealth; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee PENNSYLVANIA TURNPIKE COMMISSION AND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION JOINTLY issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives within 18 months of the adoption of this resolution.