
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 385 Session of
2017

INTRODUCED BY HEFFLEY, MATZIE, DRISCOLL, FREEMAN, METZGAR,
READSHAW, HENNESSEY, LONGIETTI, CORR, SOLOMON, ROEBUCK,
TALLMAN AND MILLARD, JUNE 9, 2017

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, JUNE 9, 2017

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to
2 conduct a study of the feasibility of providing two
3 additional passenger rail trips daily between Pittsburgh and
4 Harrisburg and its impact on existing freight rail service.

5 WHEREAS, Western Pennsylvania has historically had a high
6 level of passenger rail service with 12 daily trains as recently
7 as the 1960s, and three daily passenger trains in 2004, serving
8 the Keystone corridor west of Harrisburg; and

9 WHEREAS, In February 2005, The Keystone West Passenger Train
10 Study, prepared for Norfolk Southern and the Department of
11 Transportation, examined the Keystone corridor west of
12 Harrisburg and the impact that adding two passenger rail trains
13 a day to the then-existing two passenger rail trains a day would
14 have on freight service in the Keystone corridor west of
15 Harrisburg; and

16 WHEREAS, In Scenario No. 3, the study concluded that the
17 additional service would be compatible with freight service if
18 improvements identified in the study were made to the rail

1 infrastructure; and

2 WHEREAS, In August 2014, the Keystone West High Speed Rail
3 Study: Feasibility Report & Preliminary Service Development
4 Plan, prepared for the Department of Transportation and the
5 Federal Railroad Administration, evaluated the feasibility of
6 options to reduce rail travel times and increase trip frequency
7 on Amtrak's Keystone West portion of the Pennsylvanian service
8 and identified incremental improvements that would make the line
9 compatible for both freight and passenger rail service; and

10 WHEREAS, In April 2014, On Track to Accessibility, Increasing
11 Service of the Pennsylvanian: Benefits and Costs, prepared for
12 the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, examined the cost of adding
13 two trains a day to the Pennsylvanian's existing single train a
14 day and estimated an annual cost of between \$10 million and
15 \$12.9 million, including costs for capital investments in
16 rolling stock, to operate three trains daily on the corridor;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, The Transportation Committee of the House of
19 Representatives held a hearing on August 23, 2016, the topic of
20 which was Increasing Passenger Train Service in the Harrisburg-
21 Pittsburgh Corridor; and

22 WHEREAS, The following have sent letters supporting two
23 additional passenger rail trains a day and provided their
24 reasons for doing so: Allegheny County Chief Executive, Rich
25 Fitzgerald; Cambria County Commissioners Thomas Chernisky, B.J.
26 Smith and Mark J. Wissinger; Mifflin County Commissioners Lisa
27 Nancollas, Stephen Dunkle and Kevin Kodish; Westmoreland County
28 Commissioners Charles Anderson, Tyler Courtney and Ted Kopas;
29 Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission Chair, Steve Craig;
30 Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto; Johnstown Mayor Frank Janakovic;

1 Director, Johnstown Community and Economic Development, Renee
2 Daly; President, Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of
3 Commerce, Robert Layo; Coordinator, Lift Johnstown, Brad
4 Clemenson; Executive Director, Greater Johnstown/Cambria County
5 Convention and Visitors Bureau, Lisa Rager; President, Blair
6 County Chamber of Commerce, Joseph Hurd; President,
7 VisitPittsburgh, Craig Davis; and Chairman, Modern Transit
8 Partnership, Marshall Stevens; and

9 WHEREAS, The existing one train a day between Harrisburg and
10 Pittsburgh has excellent ridership but does not meet the
11 transportation needs of residents in the western communities
12 along the line and many others who depend upon passenger rail
13 service to travel; and

14 WHEREAS, Given the existing rail line, adding service would
15 not require entirely new rail infrastructure; and

16 WHEREAS, Residents of western Pennsylvania deserve the same
17 consideration and opportunity for increased frequency of service
18 on the existing line as residents of Pennsylvania in other parts
19 of this Commonwealth along the Keystone line; and

20 WHEREAS, Western Pennsylvanians and the communities along the
21 Pennsylvanian would like to obtain the economic development and
22 environmental benefits of passenger rail travel; and

23 WHEREAS, Increased frequency and dependable service, rather
24 than increased speed, are the main priorities of the residents
25 of these western communities; and

26 WHEREAS, Pursuant to the Passenger Rail Investment and
27 Improvement Act of 2008, Amtrak in 2010 recommended extending
28 Pennsylvanian service west of Pittsburgh to Cleveland and
29 Chicago once it had sufficient rail cars and track improvements;
30 therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the
2 Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study of
3 the feasibility of providing two additional passenger rail
4 trains a day to the existing single daily train between
5 Pittsburgh and Harrisburg; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the study determine the improvements to the
7 rail infrastructure between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg that are
8 necessary to make the additional passenger rail service
9 compatible with the existing freight service; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the study consist of:

11 (1) A review of the existing studies referenced in this
12 resolution and the transcript of the Transportation Committee
13 hearing of August 23, 2016.

14 (2) An estimate from the Department of Transportation
15 and Amtrak of the cost and schedule for two additional trains
16 a day to provide such service.

17 (3) The minimum and optimum infrastructure improvements
18 and operational requirements needed to implement the service
19 proposed by Amtrak and the Department of Transportation along
20 the Keystone West corridor.

21 (4) Locomotive power and rolling stock needed and
22 availability of Federal grants for purchase of equipment and
23 operations.

24 (5) An identification of the existing and proposed
25 Keystone West round trips that could feasibly be extended
26 west to Cleveland and Chicago pursuant to Federal
27 appropriations authorized under section 11104 of the Fixing
28 America's Surface Transportation Act (Public Law 114-94);
29 and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the committee issue to the Speaker of the

1 House of Representatives a report of its findings under
2 paragraphs (1), (2), (3) and (4) of the penultimate Resolved
3 Clause within nine months from the date of the adoption of this
4 resolution and a report of its findings under paragraph (5) of
5 the penultimate Resolved Clause within one year from the date of
6 the adoption of this resolution.