

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, MILLARD AND KORTZ, JUNE 9, 2017

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, JANUARY 23, 2018

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to
2 conduct a study of the feasibility of providing AT LEAST 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, PASSENGER TRAINS, BOTH INTERCITY AND COMMUTER, HAVE <--
10 TRAVELED THIS CORRIDOR CONTINUOUSLY SINCE FEBRUARY 1854 WHEN THE
11 HORSESHOE CURVE WAS COMPLETED; AND

12 WHEREAS, IN THE LATE 1980S AND EARLY 1990S, THE
13 PENNSYLVANIAN, DESPITE THE FIVE AND ONE-HALF HOUR TRAVEL TIMES,
14 COVERED ALL OF ITS SHORT-TERM OPERATING COSTS, AND ONE YEAR
15 DURING THAT PERIOD ACHIEVED A 131% REVENUE-TO-EXPENSE RATIO; AND

16 WHEREAS, In February 2005, The Keystone West Passenger Train
17 Study, prepared for Norfolk Southern and the Department of
18 Transportation, examined the Keystone corridor west of

1 Harrisburg and the impact that adding two passenger rail trains
2 a day to the then-existing two passenger rail trains a day would
3 have on freight service in the Keystone corridor west of
4 Harrisburg; and

5 WHEREAS, In Scenario No. 3, the study concluded that the
6 additional service would be compatible with freight service if
7 improvements identified in the study were made to the rail
8 infrastructure; and

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

17 WHEREAS, In April 2014, On Track to Accessibility, Increasing
18 Service of the Pennsylvanian: Benefits and Costs, prepared for
19 the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, examined the cost of adding
20 two trains a day to the Pennsylvanian's existing single train a
21 day and estimated an annual cost of between \$10 million and
22 \$12.9 million, including costs for capital investments in
23 rolling stock, to operate three trains daily on the corridor;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, The Transportation Committee of the House of
26 Representatives held a hearing on August 23, 2016, the topic of
27 which was Increasing Passenger Train Service in the Harrisburg-
28 Pittsburgh Corridor; and

29 WHEREAS, The following have sent letters supporting two
30 additional passenger rail trains a day and provided their

1 reasons for doing so: Allegheny County Chief Executive, Rich
2 Fitzgerald; Cambria County Commissioners Thomas Chernisky, B.J.
3 Smith and Mark J. Wissinger; Mifflin County Commissioners Lisa
4 Nancollas, Stephen Dunkle and Kevin Kodish; Westmoreland County
5 Commissioners Charles Anderson, Tyler Courtney and Ted Kopas;
6 Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission Chair, Steve Craig;
7 Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto; Johnstown Mayor Frank Janakovic;
8 Director, Johnstown Community and Economic Development, Renee
9 Daly; President, Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of
10 Commerce, Robert Layo; Coordinator, Lift Johnstown, Brad
11 Clemenson; Executive Director, Greater Johnstown/Cambria County
12 Convention and Visitors Bureau, Lisa Rager; President, Blair
13 County Chamber of Commerce, Joseph Hurd; President,
14 VisitPittsburgh, Craig Davis; and Chairman, Modern Transit
15 Partnership, Marshall Stevens; and

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

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

23 WHEREAS, SECTION 5 OF THE CAPITAL BUDGET DEBT AUTHORIZATION <--
24 AND PROJECT ITEMIZATION ACT OF 2000-2001 (ACT 27 OF 2000),
25 ITEMIZATION OF TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE PROJECTS, ADDED THREE
26 LINE ITEMS TO INCREASE CAPACITY FOR FREIGHT AND PASSENGER TRAINS
27 BY ADDING A THIRD TRACK, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO,
28 ENGINEERING, TRACK CONSTRUCTION, REALIGNMENT, GRADING, DRAINAGE,
29 COMMUNICATIONS AND SIGNAL AND ALL OTHER ASSOCIATED COSTS, IN
30 THREE DISTRICT SEGMENTS; AND

1 WHEREAS, THE SEGMENTS ITEMIZED INCLUDE PITTSBURGH TO ALTOONA
2 MAINLINE, WITH AN AUTHORIZATION OF \$117,000,000; ALTOONA TO
3 HARRISBURG MAINLINE, WITH AN AUTHORIZATION OF \$132,000,000; AND
4 OHIO LINE TO PITTSBURGH MAINLINE, WITH AN AUTHORIZATION OF
5 \$70,000,000; AND

6 WHEREAS, THE AMOUNTS ITEMIZED ARE AVAILABLE IN FULL OR PART
7 TO INCREASE CAPACITY ON THE NORFOLK SOUTHERN MAINLINE; AND

8 WHEREAS, Residents of western Pennsylvania deserve the same
9 consideration and opportunity for increased frequency of service
10 on the existing line as residents of Pennsylvania in other parts
11 of this Commonwealth along the Keystone line; and

12 WHEREAS, Western Pennsylvanians and the communities along the
13 Pennsylvanian would like to obtain the economic development and
14 environmental benefits of passenger rail travel; and

15 WHEREAS, Increased frequency and dependable service, rather
16 than increased speed, are the main priorities of the residents
17 of these western communities; and

18 WHEREAS, PASSENGERS NOW TRAVELING WEST BY AMTRAK TO
19 PITTSBURGH GENERALLY MUST SPEND TWO NIGHTS IN PITTSBURGH BEFORE
20 RETURNING TO THEIR ORIGINATING CITY BECAUSE THERE IS NO
21 EASTBOUND AFTERNOON TRAIN DEPARTURE FROM PITTSBURGH; AND

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22 WHEREAS, Pursuant to the Passenger Rail Investment and
23 Improvement Act of 2008, Amtrak in 2010 recommended extending
24 Pennsylvanian service west of Pittsburgh to Cleveland and
25 Chicago once it had sufficient rail cars and track improvements;
26 ~~therefore be it~~ AND

<--

27 WHEREAS, ACROSS AMERICA, STATES AND AUTHORITIES SUPPORTING
28 URBAN AND INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL OPERATIONS HAVE INCREASINGLY
29 DEPLOYED COMPETITION TO ATTRACT THE BEST SERVICE AT THE LOWEST
30 COST WITH THE GOAL OF HIGH PERFORMANCE PASSENGER RAIL

1 OPERATIONS; AND

2 WHEREAS, STATES AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING CALIFORNIA,
3 CONNECTICUT AND NEW MEXICO, HAVE DESIGNED MODERN, TRANSPARENT
4 EXPEDITED PROCUREMENT PRACTICES AND ADDED SERVICE ACROSS
5 EXISTING URBAN AND STATE-SUPPORTED INTERCITY ROUTES THROUGH A
6 COMPETITIVE PROCESS; AND

7 WHEREAS, THE FULLY PRIVATE BRIGHTLINE INTERCITY RAIL
8 PASSENGER SERVICE WAS LAUNCHED IN FLORIDA IN JANUARY OF 2018;
9 AND

10 WHEREAS, IT IS DESIRABLE THAT THE COMMONWEALTH ADOPT AN OPEN
11 AND EXPEDITED PROCUREMENT PROCESS IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE
12 COMPETITION AND PRIVATE SERVICE INVOLVEMENT; AND

13 WHEREAS, IT IS GENERALLY CONCEDED BY TRANSPORTATION EXPERTS
14 THAT IN TRAVEL MARKETS WHERE THERE IS AN INCREASE IN THE
15 FREQUENCY OF SERVICE, THERE IS A GEOMETRICAL INCREASE IN THE
16 DEMAND FOR THAT SERVICE; AND

17 WHEREAS, PROVIDING A SAFE AND RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION
18 INFRASTRUCTURE IS A CORE FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT; THEREFORE BE IT

19 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the
20 Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study of
21 the feasibility of providing AT LEAST two additional passenger <--
22 rail trains a day to the existing single daily train between
23 Pittsburgh and Harrisburg; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the study determine the improvements to the
25 rail infrastructure between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg that are
26 necessary to make the additional passenger rail service
27 compatible with the existing freight service; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the study consist of:

29 (1) A review of the existing studies referenced in this
30 resolution and the transcript of the Transportation Committee

1 hearing of August 23, 2016~~7~~, AS WELL AS A REVIEW AND SUMMARY <--
2 OF COMPETITIVE PRACTICES IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS, INCLUDING
3 CALIFORNIA'S HIGH SPEED RAIL, CONNECTICUT'S NEW SERVICE OVER
4 THE HARTFORD ROUTE AND NEW MEXICO'S STREAMLINED PROCUREMENT
5 PROCESS.

6 (2) An estimate from the Department of Transportation
7 ~~and~~, Amtrak AND ALTERNATIVE PASSENGER RAIL OPERATORS AND <--
8 SERVICE PROVIDERS of the cost and schedule for two additional
9 trains a day to provide such service.

10 (3) The minimum and optimum infrastructure improvements
11 and operational requirements needed to implement the service
12 proposed by Amtrak, THE HOST RAILROAD AND ALTERNATIVE SERVICE <--
13 PROVIDERS and the Department of Transportation along the
14 Keystone West corridor.

15 (4) Locomotive power and rolling stock needed and
16 availability of Federal grants for purchase of equipment and
17 operations~~7~~ AND LOCOMOTIVE POWER AND ROLLING STOCK NEEDED FOR <--
18 PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE OPERATIONS, INCLUDING THE IDEAL LENGTH
19 OF OPERATIONAL CONTRACTS SO AS TO PERMIT FINANCING THROUGH
20 PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

21 (5) An identification of the existing and proposed
22 Keystone West round trips that could feasibly be extended
23 west to Cleveland and Chicago pursuant to Federal
24 appropriations authorized under section 11104 of the Fixing
25 America's Surface Transportation Act (Public Law 114-94)~~7~~ <--
26 ~~and be it further~~ AND THE FEASIBILITY OF INTRODUCING AN OPTION <--
27 FOR ALTOONA LOCAL SERVICE AS A PART OF THE EXPANDED PASSENGER
28 RAIL PACKAGE.

29 (6) AN EVALUATION OF THE OPTIONS FOR MAXIMIZING PUBLIC-
30 PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND INTRODUCING COMPETITION INTO

1 PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE WITH A GOAL OF CREATING A HIGH
2 PERFORMANCE AND HIGH SPEED INTERCONNECTED URBAN AND INTERCITY
3 NETWORK.

4 (7) IN PURSUIT OF THE GOAL UNDER PARAGRAPH (6), A
5 RECOMMENDATION FOR A TRANSPARENT, EXPEDITED APPROVAL PROCESS
6 FOR IMPROVING PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE WITHIN THE EXISTING P3
7 LAW, 74 PA.C.S. CH. 91, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATUTORY
8 REVISIONS OF PENNSYLVANIA LAW THAT WILL PERMIT SERVICE TO BE
9 REPLACED, EXPANDED OR ADDED IN A TIMELY FASHION. IN PURSUIT
10 OF THIS GOAL, A DESIGNATED STUDY GROUP MAY BE ESTABLISHED TO
11 SOLICIT ESTIMATES AND PROVISIONAL SHADOW PROPOSALS FROM
12 AMTRAK AND QUALIFIED ALTERNATIVE OPERATORS, WHICH MAY BE
13 INVITED TO MAKE CONFIDENTIAL ORAL PRESENTATIONS. A
14 PROVISIONAL SHADOW PROPOSAL MAY RECOMMEND A PLAN TO ADD
15 SERVICE OR REPLACE CURRENT SERVICE WITH AN UPGRADED PACKAGE.
16 EACH SHADOW PROPOSAL SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ADVANCE OF
17 THE PRESENTATION TO THE HOST FREIGHT RAILROAD THROUGH A
18 NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENT, AND THE HOST RAILROAD SHOULD BE
19 INVITED TO COMMENT BY THE STUDY GROUP AND MAY INFORM THE
20 STUDY GROUP AS TO THE PREFERRED PROPOSAL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE
21 OF THE FREIGHT RAILROAD. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE
22 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, HOST RAILROAD, RAIL LABOR AND
23 OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS, THE STUDY GROUP MAY RECOMMEND A
24 PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE;

25 AND BE IT FURTHER

26 RESOLVED, That the committee issue to the Speaker of the
27 House of Representatives a report of its findings under
28 paragraphs (1), (2), (3) and (4) of the penultimate Resolved
29 Clause within ~~nine~~ SIX months from the date of the adoption of <--
30 this resolution and a report of its findings under paragraph (5)

1 of the penultimate Resolved Clause within ~~one year~~ NINE MONTHS <--
2 from the date of the adoption of this resolution.