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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 76 Session of  
2017

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INTRODUCED BY VULAKOVICH, BARTOLOTTA, BREWSTER, BROWNE, COSTA,  
FONTANA, HUGHES, LANGERHOLC, MENSCH, REGAN, RESCHENTHALER,  
SCAVELLO AND WHITE, APRIL 18, 2017

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REFERRED TO TRANSPORTATION, APRIL 18, 2017

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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 the State 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; therefore be it

26 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Legislative Budget and  
27 Finance Committee to conduct a study of the feasibility of  
28 providing two additional passenger rail trains a day to the  
29 existing single daily train between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg;  
30 and be it further

1       RESOLVED, That the study determine the improvements to the  
2 rail infrastructure between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg that are  
3 necessary to make the additional passenger rail service  
4 compatible with the existing freight service; and be it further

5       RESOLVED, That the study consist of:

6           (1) A review of the existing studies referenced in this  
7 resolution and the transcript of the Transportation Committee  
8 of the House of Representatives hearing of August 23, 2016.

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

12           (3) The minimal and optimal infrastructure improvements  
13 and operational requirements needed to implement the service  
14 proposed by Amtrak and the Department of Transportation along  
15 the Keystone Corridor west of Harrisburg.

16           (4) Locomotive power and rolling stock needed and  
17 availability of Federal grants for purchase of equipment and  
18 operations;

19 and be it further

20       RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee  
21 issue its report to the President pro tempore of the Senate  
22 within nine months from the date of the adoption of this  
23 resolution.